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By the co-operation of different writers in carrying out this plan it was hoped that a thoroughness and completeness of treatment, otherwise unattainable, might be secured. It was believed also that from writers mainly British and American fuller consideration of English Philosophy than it had hitherto received might be looked for. In the earlier series of books containing, among others, Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetics*, Pfleiderer's *Rational Theology since Kant*, Albee's *History of English Utilitarianism*, Bonar's *Philosophy and Political Economy*, Brett's *History of Psychology*, Ritchie's *Natural Rights*, these objects were to a large extent effected.

In the meantime original work of a high order was being produced both in England and America by such writers as Bradley, Stout, Bertrand Russell, Baldwin, Urban, Montague, and others, and a new interest in foreign works, German, French, and Italian, which had either become classical or were attracting public attention, had developed. The scope of the Library thus became extended into something more international, and it is entering on the fifth decade of its existence in the hope that it may contribute in this highest field of thought to that Intellectual Co-operation which is one of the most significant objects of the League of Nations and kindred organizations.

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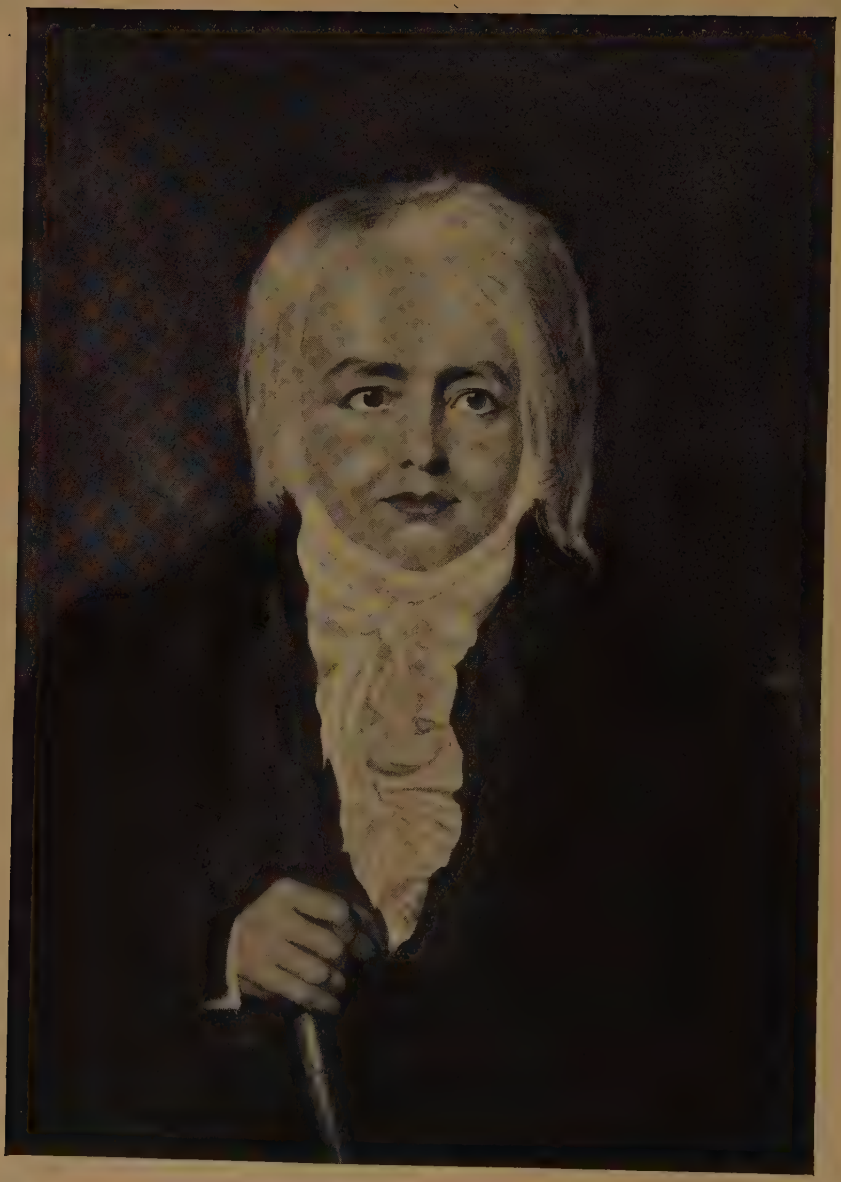

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE AET. 56

From a painting by an unknown artist, bequeathed to Derwent Coleridge by Mrs. Joseph Henry Green, now in the possession of the Rev. Gerard H. B. Coleridge of Leatherhead

COLERIDGE AS PHILOSOPHER

by

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TO

P. M.

"Yea, oft alone,
Piercing the long neglected holy cave,
The haunt obscure of old Philosophy,
He bade with lifted torch its starry walls
Sparkle, as erst they sparkled to the flame
Of odorous lamps tended by Saint and Sage."

COLERIDGE *A Tombless Epitaph*

"Thou that within me art, my Self! An Ey
Or Temple of a wide Infinity!
O What a World art Thou! a World within!
In thee appear
All Things, and are
Alive in Thee! Super-Substantial, rare,
Abov themselves, and near a-kin
To those pure Things we find
In His Great Mind,
Who made the World! Tho now eclipsed by Sin,
Yet this within my Intellect
Is found, when on it I reflect."

THOMAS TRAHERNE *My Spirit*

PREFACE

THE following study was undertaken in the conviction, gathered from a superficial acquaintance with Coleridge's published works, that as a stage in the development of a national form of idealistic philosophy his ideas are far more important than has hitherto been realized either by the educated public or by professed students of the subject. Closer study of them further convinced me that they formed in his mind a far more coherent body of philosophical thought than he has been anywhere credited with, and that to do fuller justice to this side of his multifarious and miraculous activity a more serious attempt than any with which I was acquainted required to be made to set them in relation to the state of philosophy at the time, and to the great revival of metaphysical study in England which the latter half of the nineteenth century was to witness. There was obvious difficulty, and not less obvious risk in any such attempt.

The difficulty consisted not merely in the wide diffusion of the sources from which, in his published works, his philosophical opinions had to be gathered, but in the popular character of the writings in which the more explicit statements of them were contained. We know in our own time how much injury in respect to depth and coherence may be done by the "occasionalism" of so much of the philosophical writing of England and America. Bradley used to deplore the loss to philosophy caused by William James's continual occupation

with popular exposition in lecture form. In Coleridge's case his own ardent missionary spirit combined with his straitened circumstances was a constant temptation to dissipate his powers in practical applications instead of in the systematic development of his ideas. If Lamb's gibe as to his "preaching" was an exaggeration, something like it may be said of his crusading activities against what he considered the secular and materialistic spirit of his time and country.

The risk of such an attempt as is here made is that the brilliant flashes of his innumerable *aperçus* should be robbed of their delightful element of surprise by being made to appear merely sidelights of a duller if steadier illumination, and that what was the outcome of the poetry within him finding new means of utterance, after it had died out in its proper medium of verse, should be reduced to the prose of doctrinaire philosophy.

"Coleridge suffers", writes Leslie Stephen,[1] "when any attempt is made to extract a philosophical system from his works. His admirers must limit themselves to claims for what he undoubtedly deserves, the honour of having done much to stimulate thought, and abandon any claim to the construction of a definite system."

Fortunately the light thrown upon the whole subject by the recent direction of attention to important manuscript remains has relieved the

[1] Art. "Samuel Taylor Coleridge" in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Cp. *Hours in a Library*, essay on Coleridge, vol. iv. "Coleridge never constructed a system."

student to a large extent both of the difficulty and the risk of such an attempt. It has always been known to scholars that Coleridgean manuscripts on technical subjects existed, but the prejudice against transcendental philosophy in general, and against what was supposed to be largely a plagiarized form of it in particular has until recently caused an unmerited neglect of the matter they contain. Miss Alice D. Snyder, of Vassar College, State of New York, who has been a pioneer in the sympathetic re-examination of these manuscripts, has given an account of the chief of them in her recently published book upon *Logic and Literature in Coleridge*, and some additional details are given in the appendix to the present study. While they are far from satisfying the expectations, which the poet's own allusions to them in his letters and conversations as practically finished compositions raise, they are sufficient to show that he made a far more serious attempt to work out his ideas into clear and consistent form than is commonly supposed, and enable us to supplement and bind together into something like a real volume the "Sibylline Leaves" he so lavishly scattered in his published utterances.

Even so there will be those to whom all metaphysical philosophy appears to be "transcendental moonshine", its speculative arguments mere "logical swimming-bladders". This book is not for them. Others who are still suspicious of "metaphysic" may be reminded that it is one of the ways provided by a kindly Heaven of reaching after the Unseen, and, as Coleridge himself put it, of penetrating to

the Ancient of Days under the common forms of temporal life.

It is for the above reason, and because the contents of Coleridge's published works may be assumed to be fairly familiar to the general reader, that in the more important parts of this study, the stone which the builders rejected has been made the head of the corner, and the old material used chiefly as supplementary to the new. It is unfortunate that it is not yet possible to refer the reader to chapter and verse in all cases. But Miss Snyder has made many of the passages here quoted accessible in the extracts she has printed in her book. Where this has been done I have availed myself of her annotation. For the rest, when the fuller publication, which has been undertaken by the Columbia University Press in America and the Oxford Press in England, under the editorship of Mr. Warren E. Gibbs, has been completed, I trust that the mode of reference here adopted may enable the student without much difficulty to verify the quotations. In giving them direct from the manuscripts, except in condensation for purposes of the context, and the removal here and there of the superabundant capital letters which were the fashion of the time, I have taken no other liberties with the text.

Besides my obligation to the above-mentioned American scholars, I have to express my great indebtedness first to the kindness of the Rev. Gerard H. B. Coleridge, of Leatherhead, in offering me every facility to consult the manuscripts in his possession, as well as for permission to have photographed and

reproduced as frontispiece to this volume the fine portrait of the Poet which is in his possession; and secondly to the Trustees of the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California, who have permitted me to quote from the invaluable manuscript chapters of Coleridge's *Opus Maximum* it contains. I can only trust that my use of these sources, if it does not repay, may at least not betray their confidence.

What follows was itself intended to form part of a series of studies in the History of British and American Idealism at present in preparation, and to be a link between the earlier seventeenth century and the later nineteenth developments of the great Platonic tradition in England. But for the reason above mentioned it outgrew the limits of a section in the larger book, as a part of which nevertheless I should desire it to be considered. Only so can its manifest shortcomings be in some degree covered and a place assigned to it as an attempt to supply a lost chapter in the historical succession of native forms of idealistic theory. It has had the advantage of being read in proof by Dr. James Bonar *amicorum censor amicissimus*.

DYKE END
ROTHERFIELD, SUSSEX
May 1930

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	15
INTRODUCTION	25
CHAPTER	
I. PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT	35
1. The Native Hue of Coleridge's Mind	35
2. Early Studies	37
3. "The Great and Excellent Dr. Hartley"	40
4. Berkeley and Spinoza	45
5. German Philosophy	48
II. LOGIC	60
1. Idea of Logic	60
2. Reason and Understanding	65
3. Division of Logic: The Canon	68
4. Critical Logic: The Place of Judgment in General	72
5. Synthetic Judgments	78
6. Parting with Kant: The Principle of Trichotomy	82
III. METAPHYSICS	89
1. Coleridge's Criticism of Kant	89
2. The Meaning of Ideas	96
3. The Idea Idearum	102
4. How the Idea can Involve Reality	105
5. Coleridge's Theological Platonism	110
IV. PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE	118
1. Coleridge's Interest in Science	118
2. The Idea of Nature	121
3. The Idea of Life	127
4. Coleridge and Evolution	130
V. MORAL PHILOSOPHY	136
1. The Science versus Schemes of Morals	136
2. The Method of Ethics	140
3. The Idea of the Self	142
4. Will and Motive	145
5. The Meaning of the Good	149
6. Motive and Consequences	151
7. Love the Fulfilling of the Law	156

CHAPTER PAGE

VI. Political Philosophy 162
1. Coleridge's Interest in Politics 162
2. The Origin of Political Obligation 165
3. The Law of Nations 176
4. The Idea of the Body Politic 183
5. Practical Applications 190

VII. Theory of Fine Art 195
1. Contemporary Aesthetics 195
2. Psychological and Metaphysical Data 198
3. Poetic Imagination 205
4. Imitation in Art 209
5. The Place of Taste 211
6. Theory and Practice in Literary Criticism 213

VIII. Philosophy of Religion 217
1. Specific Problems of Religious Philosophy 217
2. The Meaning of Religion 219
3. The Idea of God 222
4. The Personal Being of God 227
5. God as Special Providence 230
6. Immortality of the Soul 233
7. Nature and Origin of Evil 236
8. Doctrine of Redemption 244
9. The Origin of the Idea of God in the Soul 251

Conclusion 256

Appendix A: Materials for Study of Coleridge's Philosophy 266

Appendix B: Joseph Henry Green's Spiritual Philosophy 273

Appendix C: Passages from MS. in the Henry E. Huntington Library 277

Index 285

REFERENCES IN FOOTNOTES TO MANUSCRIPTS
AS DESCRIBED IN APPENDIX A_3

MS. Logic I and II	=	$3(a)$
MS. B, I, II and III	=	$3(b)$
MS. H	=	$3(c)$
MS. C	=	$3(d)$

INTRODUCTION

"I have not a deeper conviction on earth, than that the principles of taste, morals, and religion, which are taught in the commonest books of recent composition, are false, injurious, and debasing."

—*The Friend*

THE world into which Coleridge was born may be said to have been intellectually "out of joint". It was a period to which Hegel's phrase the "unhappy consciousness" was particularly applicable. All that was best in social and political life, in the poetry and literature of past centuries, in the Christian religion, in science itself, as the pursuit of truth guided by a sense of the essential interrelatedness of the material and the spiritual worlds, seemed to be undergoing eclipse by the application of a method which reduced everything to "disconnection dull and spiritless". Society was interpreted as the result of organized selfishness, mitigated by natural sympathy, and the transforming associations of habit; political law as the expression of some individual will, and in the end as resting in force; art and literature as the play of a fancy released from the control of fact, bound only by the formal law of "unities" carved out of the chaotic multiplicity of nature; religion as either a system of superstition maintained in the interest of the existing form of society and the morality on which it rested, or as a scheme of salvation miraculously superimposed on human life; the higher science as pledged to the view that the processes of nature and the actions of man are controlled to their inmost depths by undeviating natural law. In all this the human

mind seemed to have become estranged from the world which it inhabited. What was highest in it, the impulse to pass beyond itself and enter, through knowledge, feeling and action, into union with what is greater and more enduring than itself, was everywhere checked by the view which the prevalent principles seemed to be forcing upon it. Instead of spiritualizing nature, philosophy had naturalized spirit.

Yet spirit, too, has a nature of its own, and everywhere, even as philosophers were legislating for it, was passing beyond the limits they would fain have imposed upon it. Everywhere new influences were acting upon it, and everywhere it was responding in new uncovenanted ways. Travellers were opening up new areas of the earth's surface. Historians were familiarizing men's minds with the wealth of material to be found in the Middle Ages. From two opposite sides the idea of civic society, as the offspring of no mere agreement for the protection of individual liberty and property, but of a corporate will, unconsciously feeling after the conditions of its own moral growth: "a partnership in all art, in every virtue, and in all perfection" was being preached, and already being embodied in new ways of practice in education and government, by the disciples of Rousseau and Edmund Burke. A great Anglo-Saxon republic had risen in the West, which sought to found itself on the idea of the Will of God, with whatever narrowness of vision some of its leaders interpreted the meaning of that Will. In religion there had been a new outburst of the

sense that man lives not by bread alone, that there is that in him which seeks for a perfection far beyond anything he can attain by his own individual efforts. Through its great preachers Robert Hall, Thomas Chalmers, and others, it was summoning congregations "to apprehend things in their relations". From the absentee God of eighteenth-century Deism men were being led to the idea of a Divine Spirit that reveals itself continuously in history and common life. In the physical sciences themselves the rise into importance of anatomy and physiology was forcing into notice the dependence of life in all its forms on a principle which works from within outwards, as a constructive organizing force, and which required an entirely different method for its interpretation from that which was in vogue. Most striking of all were the new uses, to which in the poetry and art of the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth imagination was being put, and the new principles of criticism that were required for the interpretation of its work.

There have been many attempts to fix upon the characters which go to make up the spirit of romance. Mrs. Olwen Ward Campbell[1] has remarked upon the difficulty of finding a definition that will include all of them. If Scott loved "strange adventure", Lamb did not. Neither was the priest of "wild nature". And as to "wonder", Scott's happy complacency, and the shallow creed of Byron, seem curiously out of place in an age of wonder.

[1] *Shelley and the Unromantics* (1924), pp. 249 and 250.

The writer goes on to find the essence of romance in a certain kind of faith in man depending upon some sense of the inherent greatness of his soul—a hope perhaps that he is more than mortal. "If the bend of a sunlit road, a bar of music, or the glimpse of a face suddenly thrills with romance, it is because these things have brought some unexpected revelation of the value of human life;

> 'I did but see her passing by,
> And yet I love her till I die'."

I think that this is profoundly true, but it requires to be added that what to the romantic spirit is of chief value in human life is the sense of the Infinite which is implicit in it, and is the source of all man's deepest experiences. Sometimes this presence within him is brought home by what is strange, at other times by what is familiar; sometimes it speaks in the "still sad music of humanity", and moves to tears; at other times in the oddities of the forms under which this Presence manifests itself in finite life, and moves to kindly laughter. If wit, as has been said, is the sense of the littleness of things that seem great, humour may perhaps be defined as the sense of the greatness of things that seem little. If the one is the mark of the unromantic, the other is the most certain mark of the romantic. Be this as it may, it is from this sense of man's essential relation to the infinite whole, and from this alone, that the things usually referred to as most characteristic in the art and poetry of the period can be deduced, and it was this relation that the philosophy

of the time seemed wholly incapable of justifying to the intelligence. Was it therefore thus unjustifiable?

There were doubtless among the representatives of these various fields of thought and practice those who, if they had been asked what help in the defence of the truths, on which they had unconsciously laid hold, against the prevailing secularist spirit of the time they might expect from philosophy, would have rejected its offices as a "Greek gift", more likely to betray than to bestead them, and who would have been prepared to echo Wordsworth's appeal to "a few strong instincts and a few plain rules" against "all the pride of intellect and thought". But they would nevertheless have been wrong. True, if philosophy really was what it then appeared to be, namely, the attempt to reduce everything by "triumphant analysis" to its component elements, and, taking these as the ultimate realities, to treat it as a mere aggregate or mechanical resultant, while poetry, religion, even (as Wordsworth seemed to think) morals and politics were matters of unanalysable feeling, there would have been something to be said for this attitude. But to acknowledge it as the final and only maintainable attitude was to leave man's mind the victim of a conflict between different "instincts", in the end equally strong, and different "rules", equally binding upon it, and exposed to never-ending internal division and unrest.

Fortunately there were some to whom this result seemed fatal and who disbelieved in its necessity.

It all depended on the true interpretation of the meaning and method of philosophy. Did it mean the abstraction of the intellectual side of experience from all the others, and the development of the view of the world that concentration on the logic of cause and effect seemed to imply? Or was it not rather the endeavour, starting from the unity of experience as a whole, to bring the different interests of the human spirit together so that it might feel itself at home in all of them? Was it not in reality what Novalis had called it, "the homesickness of the soul"? in more technical language, the effort towards the "self-recognition of that spiritual life of the world which fulfils itself in many ways, but most completely in religion"? [1]

In England of the time of which we are speaking Coleridge has the merit of being the first to perceive the significance of this problem, and to rouse himself to find an answer to it. He saw that civilization was everywhere entering on a new phase; that forms of experience were everywhere emerging, of which the popular philosophy, as represented by Locke and Hume and Hartley, was wholly unable to give any intelligible account. This came home to him primarily, and more particularly in the fields of literature and religion, with which education and temperament most closely allied him. But the wide range of his vision enabled him to realize, as none other of his contemporaries in England did, the extent of the problem as embracing besides

[1] T. H. Green in "Popular Philosophy in its Relation to Life" (*Works*, vol. iii. p. 121).

these the whole spiritual life of man, morals and education, law and politics, science and logic themselves. He was profoundly convinced that, brilliant as were the achievements of the philosophy of the last century, yet owing to the narrowness of its foundations and the defects of its method it failed to represent what was best in philosophical tradition. He found food for this conviction in the older writers of his own country, but he had the openness of mind to feel their limitations, and to be ready to put himself to school in the thought of earlier ages and other countries. More particularly he had the insight and freedom from prejudice to perceive that it was from Germany that the chief light on the problem as set by his own time was coming. Closer acquaintance convinced him that, profound and in some respects decisive as were the contributions of German philosophy, particularly of Kant, to its solution, there was as little finality in them as in those of his own country. Rich as might be the materials he inherited from both, the building itself must be one more precisely fitted to the needs of the time and leaving more room for expansion, as new needs developed or old ones revived with new force. With a courage and persistency for which he has received too little credit, and which was even denied to him by the greatest of his contemporaries,[1] almost alone and in spite of the obstructions of his temperamental failings,

[1] "Once more", wrote Carlyle, "the tragic story of a high endowment with an insufficient will. The courage, necessary to him above all things, had been denied this man."—*Life of John Sterling.*

he pursued the ideal of such a comprehensive and organized system of thought as might at last in his own country merit the name of philosophy.

What is attempted in the following chapters is the story of the influences under which his philosophical convictions were matured, the principles of method he was led to adopt, the view to which these led as to the ultimate reality of which the world of nature and human life is the temporal expression, and the applications he made of it in the various departments of theory and practice. No claim will be made for any sort of finality in his results. On the contrary, fundamental points will be indicated in which he manifestly failed. But whatever be the ultimate judgment upon them, they formed a body of doctrine, which, so far as it was then known, exercised a profound influence on the succeeding generation, and as we now know it, *stat sua mole*. John Stuart Mill had little enough sympathy with its speculative basis, but it was of Coleridge's work as a thinker that he wrote in 1840:[1] "The name of Coleridge is one of the few English names of our time which are likely to be oftener pronounced and to become symbolic of more important things in proportion as the inward workings of the age manifest themselves more and more in outward fact. Bentham excepted, no Englishman of recent date has left his impress so deeply on the opinions and mental tendencies of those among us who attempt to enlighten their

[1] "Coleridge and Bentham," reprinted in *Dissertations and Discussions* (1859).

practice by philosophical meditation. If it be true, as Lord Bacon affirms, that a knowledge of the speculative opinions of the men between twenty and thirty years of age is the great source of political prophecy, the existence of Coleridge will show itself by no slight or ambiguous traces in the coming history of our country."

CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT

"A mind growing to the last."—DERWENT COLERIDGE

1. THE NATIVE HUE OF COLERIDGE'S MIND

THE philosophical development of a mind like Coleridge's, omnivorous, sensitive, growing to the last, is necessarily a tangled tale; in his case rendered more tangled still by apparently contradictory accounts of it in his own writings and conversations. There was no recorded line of thought with which he was unacquainted and with which his soul had not some bond of sympathy. I believe that the chief mistake to be avoided is that of attributing too much to any one of the multitudinous influences that went to the formation of his opinions. Yet one or two things stand clearly out, first in the native hue of his own mind modified and exaggerated in later life by certain morbid traits in his moral experience, secondly in the intellectual currents which stimulated and gave direction to his thought and in the order in which he came under their influence.

His nature was profoundly religious not only in the Platonic sense of belief in the supremacy of Good as an abstract quality, nor in the Spinozistic sense of absorption in the vision of the wholeness of things, but in the sense of a longing for a personal relation with a Mind and Will as at once the source of all reality and a living presence in the soul.

However necessary, as concerned with the grounds and conditions of religion, philosophy might be, it could never take its place. Even though philosophy shall have become the habit of referring to the Invisible as the supreme Will revealing itself in reason and pouring forth in life, this is not enough. "This is a constituent of Religion," he wrote, "but something is still wanting. To be Religion it must be the reference of an intelligent responsible Will Finite to an Absolute Will, and the reference must refer as a Will and a Life, i.e. a Person to a living I am. We may feel *from* and about a thing, an event, a quality, we can feel *toward* a Person only. The personal in me is the ground and condition of Religion, and the Personal alone is the Object."[1] It was this and not any mere attachment to a tradition that was the source of his belief in Christianity as "alone reflecting the character of religion", and in this sense "the only true religion". It was "Judaism + Greece". While in Greece the Personality of God is the esoteric doctrine, the infinite whole the exoteric, in Christianity it is the reverse. Personality is the exoteric, the whole of Good the esoteric. That this side of his philosophy obtained exaggerated emphasis in the later years of his life owing to his personal craving for a God who "answers prayer" and *forgives* is, I think, undoubtedly true and traceable to the morbid bent in his own character. But quite apart from that, it is doubtful whether he could ever have reconciled himself to any form of philosophy which seemed to

[1] MS. C, p. 115.

him to fail to do justice to what he regarded as pivotal in human life—the binding (*religio-religatio*) of man's will to a Will that is greater than itself.[1]

Leaving this for the present as belonging more particularly to his philosophy of religion, we have certain outstanding influences coming from without that mark milestones in his spiritual pilgrimage.

2. Early Studies

We need not perhaps take too seriously Lamb's picture[1] of the infant metaphysician "unfolding the mysteries of Iamblichus and Plotinus" to admiring school-fellows at Christ's Hospital. Yet we have his own word for it that while yet at school he began to experience "a rage for Metaphysics occasioned by the essays on 'Liberty' and 'Necessity' in Cato's Letters and more by theology", and that by the time he left he had already, with the aid of Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*, and in spite of the flogging he received for his errancy from the

[1] There is a certain truth in A. W. Benn's ironical remark, "One can understand that the sense of sin conceived as an overwhelming fatality should have been particularly active with Coleridge. It is less intelligible that he should have generalized this deep and well-founded consciousness of his own delinquencies into a comprehensive indictment of human nature as such; and that he should have regarded the spirit of the Gospel as a cure for the world at large when it was proving so totally inoperative in his own particular instance" (*English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 239). But the point is not his desire to convict the human race of its sin but to find a ground of pardon for his own.

[2] *Essays of Elia*, "Christ's Hospital five-and-thirty years ago".

path of scholastic routine, boxed the compass of Christian heresies.[1]

Of more importance were the influences with which he came in contact when in 1791 he proceeded to Jesus College, Cambridge. It was David Hartley's college, but there were other currents of thought in the University, and, though Cambridge Platonism is usually associated with the earlier seventeenth-century movement, it is important to remember the revival of Platonic studies in that University in these very years through the translations of Thomas Taylor,[2] of which Coleridge could hardly have failed to take notice. We shall probably be right also in referring to this period[3] his acquaintance with the Cambridge Platonists, whose writings would

[1] "At a very premature age, even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics and theological controversies." *Works* (Shedd's edition), iii. pp. 152–3, and the biographical fragment in MS. C printed in J. Gillman's *Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (1838), p. 23.

[2] These deserve more notice in any history of British idealism than they have hitherto received. They include, from Plotinus, *Ennead* i. book 6, Concerning the Beautiful (1787); An Essay on the Beautiful from the Greek of Plotinus (1792); Five Books of Plotinus (1794); from Plato, the *Phaedrus*, *Cratylus*, *Phaedo*, *Parmenides*, and *Timaeus* (1792–3). If, as Taylor's biographer said, his critics knew more Greek, he knew more Plato.

[3] See Professor C. Howard's *Coleridge's Idealism* (1925), useful as a corrective of the view which exaggerates German influences in Coleridge's development, but otherwise itself inclined to exaggerate the influence over him of writers whom Coleridge himself brands as a group for "ignorance of natural science; physiography scant in fact and stuffed out with fables; physiology imbrangled with an inapplicable logic and a misgrowth of *entia rationalia*, i.e. substantial abstractions". (*Notes on English Divines*, "Henry More's Theological Works", ii. p. 129.)

harmonize with what he might have learned from Plato and Plotinus, and go to deepen the mystic strain in his thought. But, aided by his intimacy with Frend,[1] the attraction of the leading representative of the Lockean tradition was too strong for him, and for the next five years he passed under the influence of David Hartley, described in his poem, *Religious Musings*, of 1794 as:

> "He of mortal kind
> The wisest; he first who marked the ideal tribes
> Up the fine fibres through the sentient brain."

In the same year he wrote to Southey: "I am a complete necessitarian, and I understand the subject almost as well as Hartley himself, and believe the corporeality of thought, namely that it is motion."[2] That this was the dominant influence in his thought up to 1796 seems proved by his allusion in September of that year to his infant son. "His name", he writes, "is David Hartley Coleridge. I hope that ere he be a man, if God destines him for continuance in this life, his head will be convinced of and his heart saturated with the truths so ably supported by that great master of Christian Philosophy." It might seem puzzling that in the poem on the *Destiny of Nations*, written apparently

[1] Gillman's *Life*, etc., p. 317.

[2] *Letters*, vol. i. p. 113 (1895 ed.). I see no reason to doubt, as Howard does, the sincerity of these words. We have the application of the doctrine of "philosophical necessity" to the ethics of revolution in the Bristol Address, also dated 1794. (See *Conciones ad Populum*, p. 21. "Vice originates not in the man but in the surrounding circumstances, not in the heart but in the understanding.")

about the same time,[1] he should have denounced those who cheat themselves

> "With noisy emptiness of learned phrase,
> Their subtle fluids, impacts, essences,
> Untenanting creation of its God",

in words that seem so precisely applicable to Hartley's materialistic psychology, were it not that in that philosopher's writings we have a conspicuous illustration of the conflict referred to in the above Introduction.

3. "The Great and Excellent Dr. Hartley"

Hartley's philosophy was, as he tells us himself at the beginning of his chief book,[2] a development on the one hand of "what Mr. Locke and other ingenious persons[3] since his time have delivered concerning the influence of associations over our opinions and affections, and its use in explaining those things in an accurate and precise way which are commonly referred to the power of habit and custom in a general and indeterminate one"; and on the other of "hints concerning the performance of sensation and motion which Sir Isaac Newton has given at the end of the *Principia* and in the questions annexed to his *Optics*". The "accuracy and precision" which Hartley claimed to have

[1] See Oxford Edition of the Poems (1912), i. p. 131.

[2] *Observations on Man: His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (1749).

[3] The allusion so precisely fits Hume as to render unlikely W. R. Sorley's surmise (*History of English Philosophy*, p. 195) that Hartley had not heard of him at this time. *The Treatise of Human Nature* had appeared in 1739.

added to the older doctrine of association consisted in a fuller statement than had hitherto been attempted of its "laws", and in the application of them to explain: (1) the formation from a simpler of a more complex idea which "may not appear to bear any relation to its compounding parts"; (2) the generation of voluntary action through the connection of a sensation or an idea with a movement; (3) judgments of assent and dissent (i.e. beliefs) as only "very complex internal feelings which adhere by association to such clusters of words as are called propositions"; and (4) the constitution of intellectual pleasures and pains, such as those of imagination, ambition, self-interest, sympathy, "theopathy", and the moral sense, out of simpler constituents. The development of Sir Isaac Newton's "hints" was the doctrine of vibrations or "vibratiuncles" residing in the pores of the nerves and causing sensations, which may be said to be the first sketch of a complete physiological psychology. Into the details of this it is not necessary to enter. What concerns us is the theory of mind which in the first place reduces its action to the subconscious one of mechanical association, to the total exclusion of selective attention or imaginative construction,[1] and in the second place explains consciousness as a surface play of material movements, "the quick silverplating behind the looking-glass", as Coleridge learned to call it, enabling us

[1] Imagination has only five lines devoted to it in the whole treatise and that in a section upon Dreams, where it is distinguished from "reverie" as involving less attention to thoughts and greater disturbance by "foreign objects". *Op. cit*, part i. prop. xci.

to see what is going on, but contributing nothing to it.

If we ask how such a philosophy could come to be put forward by its author, or find any acceptance with intelligent readers as a satisfactory account of "Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations", it is only fair to both the author and his public to remember that there was no pretence of this kind. The Second Part of Hartley's treatise is devoted to an exposition of natural and revealed religion from an entirely different point of view from that of the first part, and enables the writer to pose as the defender of faiths, of which his scientific theory had destroyed the intellectual foundations.

Bearing all this in mind, we wonder less to find the same conflict of principles in Hartley's ardent disciple. I believe that a close examination of the poems of the period would show that it reflected itself there in the form of a domination of his mind by conceptions derived from a necessitarian philosophy which was in essence antagonistic to the romantic spirit of freedom that was the deepest strain of Coleridge's own intellectual being. An American critic has said of *Religious Musings* that "the principles of unity and necessity fairly jostle each other in rivalry for the reader's attention".[1]

> "There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind
> Omnific"

[1] G. F. Gingerich, in article, "From Necessity to Transcendentalism in Coleridge", in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. xxxv.

is the text of the poem and of this whole period of the poet's life. We have the same note in the invocation in *The Destiny of Nations* (1796) to the

> "All-conscious Presence of the Universe,
> Nature's vast ever-acting Energy!
> In will, in deed, Impulse of All to All!"

In the poems of the following years these abstractions are softened and humanized, and in the *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* they are wholly subordinated to the interest of the characters and incidents. It would be pedantry to look for philosophical doctrines in their magical lines. Yet the power of the first consists just in the sense it imparts of the sinister and fateful power that works in the events. If we cannot say with Gingerich that the Mariner is "a most engaging Unitarian", we can agree with him that in this poem "Coleridge has given, in a rarefied etherealized form, the exhalations and aroma of his personal experience of Necessity and Unity, the blossom and fragrancy of all his earlier religious meditations".[1] The fact that in *Christabel* the religious motive has disappeared the same writer takes as a sign that "in this direction the evolution of Coleridge's mind has gone as far as possible", and draws the conclusion that "those

[1] For the above reason I think this a truer statement of the case than Leslie Stephen's more comprehensive remark: "The germ of all Coleridge's utterances may be found—by a little ingenuity—in *The Ancient Mariner*, though we may well agree that "part of the secret (of the strange charm of the poem) is the ease with which Coleridge moves in a world of which the machinery—as the old critics called it—is supplied by the mystic philosopher."—*Hours in a Library*, vol. iv. "Coleridge".

who suppose that, if his poetic powers had remained unimpaired, Coleridge would have continued writing Ancient Mariners and Christabels imagine a vain thing". What was required was a complete reorientation of the shaping spirit of imagination within him to the new view of the world which his studies in philosophy had by this time begun to open before him. It was to this that he proved unequal. No one knew it better than himself or knew better the reason of it in the failure of the fountain within him of the "joy" that alone could bear him through the task.[1] The destroyer of this creative joy was not (as literary critics have so often said [2]) his metaphysical studies (these were his solace for the loss of it), but the fatal drug to which at this time he became addicted.[3] What in the ruin of his own poetic hopes he had the genius and the magnanimity to see was that the strength

[1] The lines in the *Ode to Dejection* (1802) are well known:

> "Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
> Which wedding Nature to us, gives in dower
> A new Earth and new Heaven."

[2] For the most part repeating Wordsworth's view that "Coleridge had been spoilt for a poet by going to Germany". His mind, Wordsworth held, had thereby been fixed in its natural direction towards metaphysical theology. "If it had not been so he would have been the greatest, the most abiding poet of his age." *Prose Works*, iii. 469.

[3] "Poetry", wrote De Quincey, who knew here what he was talking about, "can flourish only in the atmosphere of happiness. But subtle and perplexed investigations of difficult problems are amongst the commonest resources for beguiling the sense of misery." De Quincey also recognized that while dejection might stimulate to speculation, it is insufficient to sustain exertion. "Opium-eaters are tainted with the infirmity of leaving works unfinished." *Narrative Papers*, vol. ii. "Coleridge and Opium-Eating".

that was denied to him had been so richly bestowed on his friend:

> "Currents self-determined, as might seem,
> Or by some inner Power."

As Gingerich has rightly seen, the importance of the poem from which these words are quoted[1] in Coleridge's spiritual history cannot easily be over-estimated. It is with this history and the results for philosophy that we are here concerned.

4. Berkeley and Spinoza

At what exact time Coleridge became aware of this conflict of principles it is difficult to determine. Different accounts are given by his biographers. Referring to the name of Berkeley which he gave to his second son, born in May 1798, J. D. Campbell[2] comments that it was "in honour of the Philosopher, the keystone of whose system was still in his disciples' eyes indestructible". He does not tell us what this keystone was, but the context seems to indicate that he had in mind the sensational basis of Berkeley's earlier thought of which Hartley's doctrine of association was a development. Turnbull, on the other hand, tells us that he named his second son "after the idealist philosopher who had now displaced Hartley, who had been in the ascendant when the first child was born".[3] This seems to find

[1] To William Wordsworth (1807).
[2] *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, p. 89.
[3] *Biographia Epistolaris*, A. Turnbull (1911), vol. i. p. 162.

support in what Southey wrote in 1808, "Hartley was ousted by Berkeley, Berkeley by Spinoza, Spinoza by Plato",[1] and by Coleridge's own statement that when his earlier philosophy failed him [2] and "his metaphysical theories lay before him in the hour of anguish as toys by the bedside of a child deadly sick", he turned again to "Plato and the mystics, Locke, Berkeley, Descartes, and Spinoza". The difficulty vanishes if we remember the difference between the earlier empirical Berkeley to whom *esse* is *percipi* and the later Platonic to whom *esse* is *concipi*, and that the discovery of this difference was itself one of the important steps in Coleridge's philosophical development. Cottle quotes him in 1796 as having said: "Bishop Taylor, old Baxter, David Hartley, and the Bishop of Cloyne are my men". By 1798 he may well have discovered the difference between the last two.

At what exact time Berkeley's star began to wane is uncertain. By the time Derwent was born (September 14, 1800) there were obvious reasons against naming him after the philosophical idol of the moment. We have his own word for it that in these years he found in Spinoza's idea of God what he

[1] See Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 165, n. 1, who quotes it without noting the inconsistency with his own previous statement.

[2] It would be a mistake to attribute to this early period the devastating criticism of Hartley which we have in chapters v–vii of *Biog. Lit.* But the less reason we have to commit the mistake, the more remarkable is the complete mastery he by that time had obtained of the philosophical situation. The critical merits of these and the following two chapters have not been sufficiently recognized by literary critics who have been too ready to allow them to be obscured by the evidences of "plagiarism" in the notorious chapter xii.

describes as an "Ararat", and as late as December 1799 he could still speak of "my Spinozism".[1] But this could not remain a permanent resting-place for his ark. The Infinite of Spinoza he saw to be the negation of all "the determinations that go to make the individual". No man, Hegel said, can ever be a philosopher who has not at one time been a Spinozist; but it is also perhaps true that no philosopher who is a man has ever remained one. While the head demands the universal, the heart yearns for the particular. Coleridge saw no way to "reconcile personality" with such infinity. While "his head was with Spinoza his whole heart remained with Paul and John". The old Pantheism of Spinoza he held to be far better than the new Deism, which is "but the hypocrisy of materialism". "Did philosophy start with an *it is* instead of an *I am*, Spinoza would be altogether true."[2] But its starting-point was wrong.

Into the midst of these speculative doubts we may imagine coming his closer intercourse with Wordsworth and the co-operation which issued in the famous experiment of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. His generous enthusiasm for his friend's work is a matter of literary history. He had the insight to see in it an excellence of the creative imagination, a vision of the faculty divine, which was an entirely

[1] *Letters* (1895 ed.), i. p. 319. On his admiration for Spinoza's great moral qualities as distinguished from "the whole nest of popular infidels" (including Hobbes and Voltaire), see Gillman, *op. cit.*, p. 319 foll.

[2] See H. Crabb Robinson's *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence*, 2nd ed., 1872, ii. 5, and *Letters*, i. 209.

new thing in poetry. But it was not merely to him a new fact. It was a summons to new thought. "This excellence", he tells us, "I no sooner felt than I sought to understand."[1] But where to find the clue to the understanding of it? There was clearly no help to be looked for in the Associationist psychology. This might account for the vagaries of fancy, though even here the images had to be formed so as to cohere in a new whole. Before the brooding spirit of imagination and the revelation of new significance in the common things of life it was helpless. Between this and merely fanciful creations there was a distinction, not of degree, but of kind. Equally helpless was the soulless pantheism which he had found in Spinoza. The clue, if clue there were, must be sought elsewhere.

5. German Philosophy

It was at this point that a new chapter of his intellectual history opened. His own account in "Satyrane's Letters" [2] of the visit which, accompanied by the Wordsworths, he paid to Germany in 1798 is familiar to students of literature. Together they visited Klopstock, the author of the once celebrated *Messiah*.[3] For the rest the difference between the two men in the use which they made of their opportunity was characteristic. To Words-

[1] How he came afterwards to understand it we know from the fine passage quoted, *Biographia Literaria*, chap. iv, from No. 5 of *The Friend*.

[2] Printed in *Biographia Literaria*.

[3] De Quincey, *op. cit.*, has given a lively account of this visit.

worth, with his essential insularity, it was simply a "change of sky". He was content to remain for the most part at Goslar wandering "among unknown men" and writing "home thoughts from abroad".[1] To Coleridge the journey was a pilgrimage of the spirit—an opportunity "to finish his education". He fared first to Ratzeburg, then to Göttingen, where he settled for the best part of a year, with the aim of "a more thorough revolution in his philosophical principles and a deeper insight into his own heart". His philosophical orientation had for the time to be postponed to a mastery of the language, to attendance on Blumenbach's lectures on physiology, and to literary studies, more particularly of Lessing,[2] that bore only indirectly upon it. But before returning to England in the following July he provided himself with the means for such a study by the purchase of thirty pounds' worth of books, chiefly metaphysics.

We get an interesting glimpse of the state of Kantian study in England at this time from the Essay of De Quincey,[3] in which he pours contempt on editors and reviewers for their failure to throw

[1] C. H. Herford's *Age of Wordsworth.*

[2] A life of whom, interwoven with a sketch of German literature, "in its rise and present state", he designed at this time. See letters of January 4 (*Letters*, i. 270) and May 21, 1799 (*Tom Wedgwood*, 1903, p. 70), in the latter of which he tells Wedgwood that one of his objects was that "of conveying under a better name than my own ever will be opinions which I deem of the highest importance". It was unfortunate that later in life, in writing *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, he gave the appearance of having done the opposite with regard to the inspiration of Scripture.

[3] *Philosophical Writers* (1856).

any light on the dark places of Kant's philosophy, promises something better, but for the present contents himself with stigmatizing it as sceptical in religion and reactionary in politics. Elsewhere [1] he finds no words strong enough to denounce the "Apollyon mind" and "the ghoulish creed" of the "world-shattering Kant". On the other hand, his long Essay on the "Last Days of Immanuel Kant"[2] and his translation of the *Sketch of Universal History on a Cosmopolitan Plan* did much to stimulate the sympathetic study of Kant in the generation immediately following.

At what precise date Coleridge began the minuter examination of contemporary German philosophy it is difficult to say. At the end of 1796 he refers to Mendelssohn as Germany's profoundest metaphysician, with the exception of "the most unintelligible Immanuel Kant".[3] In his letters of 1800 there are allusions to the light he has gained on "several parts of the human mind which have hitherto remained either wholly unexplained or most falsely explained", to prolonged meditations on "the relations of thought to things", and to his "serious occupation" in metaphysical investigation of the laws by which our feelings form affinities with each other and with words.[4] Yet in connection with an unpublished memorandum of February 1801, Leslie Stephen tells us that "Coleridge writes as though he had as yet read no German philo-

[1] *Literary Remains*, pp. 171–2.
[2] *Narrative and Miscellaneous Papers* (1853).
[3] *Letters*, i. p. 203, n. 2.
[4] Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

sophy . . There is none of the transcendentalism of the Schelling kind . . He still sticks to Hartley and to the Association doctrine . . He is dissatisfied with Locke but has not broken with the philosophy generally supposed to be in the Locke line. In short, he seems to be at the point where a study of Kant would be ready to launch him in his later direction, but is not at all conscious of the change." [1]

It is probably to March of this year (1801) that we must refer the crisis. In a letter of the 16th he tells Thomas Poole that after a period of "most intense study", if he does not delude himself, he has "not only completely extricated the notions of time and space but overthrown the doctrine of association as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern infidels—especially the doctrine of necessity". A week later he thinks he has unmasked the fallacy that underlies the whole Newtonian [2] philosophy, namely, that the mind is merely "a lazy Looker-on on an external world": if this be not so, "if the mind be not passive, if it be indeed made in God's image, the Image of the Creator, there is ground for the suspicion that any system built on the passiveness of mind must be false as a system".

How far are we justified in concluding that this revolution was the result of his German studies?

[1] *Letters*, i. p. 351 n.

[2] Cp. *Table Talk*. Works (Shedd), vol. vi. p. 351, where he accuses Newton of not being able to conceive the idea of a law: "He thought it a physical thing after all".

4. Debt to Kant and Schelling

In support of the view of the dominance of their influence we have the classical passage in the *Biographia Literaria* in which he describes the general effect upon his mind of his first introduction to Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. "The writings of the illustrious sage of Koenigsberg, the founder of the Critical Philosophy, more than any other work, at once invigorated and disciplined my understanding. The originality, the depth, and the compression of the thoughts; the novelty and subtlety, yet solidity and importance of the distinctions; the adamantine chain of the logic, and, I will venture to add (paradox as it will appear to those who have taken their notion of Immanuel Kant from Reviewers and Frenchmen), the clearness and evidence of the Critique of Pure Reason, the Critique of Judgment, of the Metaphysical Elements of Natural Philosophy, and his Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason, took possession of me with a giant's hand." While it might have its attraction for a descendant of Scottish Covenanters who had inherited something of their spirit, like Carlyle, Fichte's was not a philosophy likely to find a congenial soil in the mind of a poet like Coleridge. He gives credit to Fichte for dealing the first mortal blow to Spinozism "by commencing with an act instead of a thing or substance", but he deplores his "boastful and hyperstoic hostility to Nature as lifeless, godless, and altogether unholy: while his religion consisted in the assumption of a mere *Ordo*

Ordinans which we were permitted *exoterice* to call God; and his ethics in an ascetic and almost monkish mortification of the natural passions and desires".[1] Schelling was altogether different. "It was in Schelling's *Natur-Philosophie* and *System des transcendental* (*en*) *Idealismus* that I first found a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself and a powerful assistance to what I had yet to do . . With exception of one or two fundamental ideas which can not be withheld from Fichte, to Schelling we owe the completion and the most important victories of this revolution in Philosophy." "To me", he adds, "it will be happiness and honour enough should I succeed in rendering the system itself intelligible to my countrymen and in the application of it to the most awful of subjects for the most important of purposes." From the same work we know that there was a period of his life at which he felt himself so much at one with Schelling's philosophy that he was prepared to risk his reputation for literary honesty by adopting whole portions of its text as the basis of his own theory of poetry.[2]

All this, combined with the unanimous testimony of his friends as to the impression which his conversations left upon them, would lend countenance

[1] As he puts it elsewhere, "Fichte in his moral system is but a caricature of Kant; or rather he is a Zeno with the cowl, rope, and sackcloth of a Carthusian monk. His metaphysics have gone by; but he has the merit of having prepared the ground for the dynamic philosophy by the substitution of act for thing". *Letters*, ii. p. 682.

[2] See below.

to the view that his own philosophy was little more than a transcript from the German of Kant and Schelling, from whom he selected what happened to suit him. But this would be a superficial view of the real state of the case, and one of the first results of a closer study of his philosophical opinions as a whole is the conviction of its entire baselessness.

Leaving this for the present and confining ourselves to the more external evidence, we have in the first place his own reiterated statement that the essential elements of his philosophy were already planted in his mind before he became acquainted with the later German thought.[1] While perhaps, considering the audience to which it was addressed, it would be hardly justifiable to appeal to the absence of direct allusion to German influences in the first authoritative sketch of his philosophy in the 1818 edition of *The Friend*, it is undoubtedly true, as he himself says, that this contains nothing, not even the distinction between Reason and Understanding and the "law of polarity or essential dualism",[2] which is not traceable either to Greek

[1] The most decisive passage is that in the letter to his nephew of April 8, 1825 (*Letters*, vol. ii. 735): "I can not only honestly assert but I can satisfactorily prove by reference to writings (Letters, Marginal Notes, and those in books that have never been in my possession since I first left England for Hamburgh, etc.) that all the elements, the differentials, as the algebraists say, of my present opinions existed for me before I had ever seen a book of German Metaphysics later than Wolf and Leibnitz or could have read it, if I had." Cp. this with *Anima Poetae* 106 of unrecorded date.

[2] *The Friend* (1844 ed.), i. p. 206 (Shedd, ii. p. 142) foll. and i. p. 121 (Shedd, ii. p. 91), where the latter is defined as the principle that "every power in nature and in spirit must evolve an opposite as the sole means and condition of its manifestation; and all opposition is a tendency to reunion" and expressly referred to Heraclitus.

philosophy or to "the great men of Europe from the middle of the fifteenth till towards the close of the seventeenth century", whose "principles both of taste and philosophy" he upheld.[1] But by far the most effective answer from this side to the accusation of the plagiarism of anything that was essential to his own system from Schelling is the running commentary on some of the German's works that was published by Henry Nelson Coleridge in the 1847 edition of the *Biographia Literaria*, the general line of which is to convict him of "gross materialism".[2]

The precise moment of disillusionment with Schelling is difficult to fix. If we assume that it had not taken place in 1817 (the date of the publication of the *Biographia Literaria*), a note of August 27, 1818, on Jacob Boehme's *Aurora* tells of his own early intoxication with "the vernal fragrance and effluvia from the flowers and firstfruits of Pantheism, while still unaware of its bitter root", and "pacifying his religious feelings in the meantime with the fine distinction that, though God was = the World, the World was not = God—as if God were a whole composed of parts of which the World was one". In the same note, after defining two types of error which he had found in Boehme as "the occasional substitution of the accidents of his own peculiar acts of association for processes *in universo*",

[1] *The Friend*, Appendix A.

[2] See Shedd, iii. p. 691 foll., and cp. MS. C, where Schelling is accused of having "failed to make intelligence comprehensible (as the source of definite limitation) instead of assuming it as the ground, as I myself do".

and "the confusion of the creaturely spirit in the great moments of its renascence for (with?) the deific energies in Deity itself", he goes on to attribute the first to Spinoza and both to Schelling and his followers.[1]

In view of all this, there seems to be no reason to question either the sincerity or the truth of the autobiographical statement above quoted. The acceptance of it is quite compatible with the belief, first, that the discovery of the coincidence of the teaching of Kant's *Critique* with what he had "toiled out for himself" exercised an immense confirmatory influence on his thought, and gave him a new confidence in the exposition of it; and secondly, that while still in doubt as to the full effect of the new influences, and suffering perhaps from a certain loss of nerve, he came under the spell of Schelling. But that this was only a passing phase of a mind which was "growing and accumulating to the last", is put beyond all doubt not only by the above quotations, but by his own express criticism of the views put forward in the *Biographia*, which within a month of his death has something of the solemnity of a testamentary deposition: "The metaphysical disquisition at the end of the first volume of the

[1] See Alice D. Snyder's article on "Coleridge on Giordano Bruno" in *Modern Language Notes*, xlii. 7, and cp. *Letters*, ii. p. 683. He thinks the coincidence between Schelling and Boehme "too glaring to be solved by mere independent coincidence in thought and intention", and in reading the former "remains in the same state, with the same dimly and partially light-shotten mists before his eyes, as when he read the same things for the first time in Jacob Boehme" (Shedd, iii. p. 695).

Biographia Literaria is unformed and immature; it contains the fragments of the truth, but it is not fully thought out. It is wonderful to myself to think how infinitely more profound my views now are, and yet how much clearer they are withal. The circle is completing; the idea is coming round to and to be the common sense."[1]

If it were worth while at this time of day to defend Coleridge's work as a whole against the charge of "plagiarism", one could not do it better than in the words which his disciple J. H. Green uses in reference to the *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*: "in the case of a work which is an aggregate and not a growth . . . it would be as just to reclaim, as it would be easy to detach the borrowed fragments; but where the work is the result of a formative principle which gives it unity and totality, where the thoughts and reasonings are the development of a living principle to an organic whole, it may be safely assumed that the author, who interweaves with his own the kindred products of other men's minds, is impelled only by the sense and pleasurable sympathy of a common intellectual activity, and that he would or might have arrived at the same or similar results where these are potentially contained in the principle that gave birth to his reasonings."[2]

In what sense Coleridge's philosophy is such an organic whole it is our aim in this study more

[1] See *Works*, vol. vi. p. 520.

[2] Introduction to *op. cit.*, with which might be compared what Turnbull says, *Biographia Epistolaris*, vol. ii. p. 146.

precisely to determine. Meantime the conclusion that emerges from the above review is that in the course of the second decade of the new century Coleridge had passed from the pantheism not only of Spinoza but of Schelling, and was working in the direction of a view which should be a synthesis of the realism which it represented with the idealism of Kant.[1] It was on this line that he believed that English philosophy had to be reconstructed if justice was to be done at once to man's deepest interests and to the outer facts of nature and history.

The work in which already in 1814 he had conceived the idea of developing the view he had reached into a complete system, and which when completed was to revolutionize "all that had been called Philosophy or Metaphysics in England and France since the era of the commencing predominance of the mechanical system at the restoration of the second Charles",[2] has been treated by his biographers [3] far too much as a mere vision. Even although it were more visionary than we now know it to have been, his continual mention of it from 1821 onwards is at least proof that he had reached a stable resting-place after his long wanderings, and that whatever he thenceforth wrought

[1] See Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 244, who compares this synthesis with "the unity of Substance and Subject" that Hegel was working out in these same years.

[2] Letter of January 1821 (Allsop, *Letters*, etc., of *S. T. Coleridge*, 3rd ed., p. 33).

[3] See e.g. Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 251. For allusions to it as his *Magnum Opus*, see *ibid.* Index *sub verb.*

out would be as the deepening and expansion of a single principle which he had made his own. If this principle and the synthesis it represented tended in the end to ally him with Fichte rather than with Hegel, it is not the less interesting in view of the recent pronounced reaction of idealist philosophy both in England and America in the direction of Voluntarism.

In what follows no special attempt will be made to trace Coleridge's mental development further. Our object will rather be to state the broader features of the form of nineteenth-century idealism of which more than any other he was the founder, as these appear in his maturer writings, and to follow the applications he made of his principles in the different fields of philosophy.

CHAPTER II

LOGIC

"The first source of falsehood in Logic is the abuse and misapplication of Logic itself."—MS. *Logic.*

1. Idea of Logic

Whatever changes Coleridge's philosophical opinions underwent, one thing remained fixed and constant, the guiding star of all his wanderings, namely, the necessity of reaching a view of the world from which it could be grasped as the manifestation of a single principle, and therefore as a unity. The attempt to reach such a view was what he meant by Metaphysics, or philosophy in general. There was nothing that he deplored more than the neglect into which this study had sunk: "the long eclipse of philosophy, the transfer of that name to physical and psychological empiricism, and the non-existence of a learned philosophical class."[1] If there was one thing more than another which he regarded as his own special mission, taking precedence of any system of opinions, however dear, it was the revival of the philosophical spirit in his fellow-countrymen.

But philosophy in the sense of metaphysics was a large word and fell into various departments. Granted that it meant, as Plato defined it, the contemplation of all time and all existence, it was itself an exercise of thought, and, before the

[1] *Logic* MS. (See Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 121.)

contemplation of time and existence must come the contemplation of thought (itself, after all, the most certain of existences), and the principles of its operation. In other words, it had to be prefaced by a study of Logic. True to this conviction, Coleridge had early become inspired with the idea of a work on Logic which should be a "propaedeutic" to the larger study.

The science of Logic in Coleridge's time was undergoing a process of change and expansion. The older Aristotelian logic still remained, and was being expounded in England and on the Continent by leading writers.[1] But new matter had been introduced into it by Kant's treatment of the categories—new wine, as it was to prove, into old bottles. Whewell's and Mill's work on Inductive Logic was still in the future, but the advances in science were making a reconstruction of the whole Science yearly more pressing. What Kant had begun in expanding the field, Hegel was already engaged in completing, and after the appearance of his *Logic* (1812–16) it was no longer possible to accept the old formal logic as anything but a more or less artificial simplification of the deeper movements of thought.

Here, as in so much else, Coleridge represented a transition stage in the coming transformation. So early as 1803 we have from him, in a letter to William Godwin,[2] the intimation that he was

[1] Coleridge mentions Leibniz, Wolff, Mendelssohn, Condillac; and in England, Hartley, Isaac Watts, William Guthrie.

[2] See A. Turnbull's *Biographia Epistolaris*, vol. i. p. 270. (Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 50.) The omission among the names here mentioned of that of Kant is significant.

engaged on a work which was to be "introductory to a *system*" and was to include, besides the common system of Logic and an outline of the history of the science, his own "Organon veré Organon". It was to conclude with considerations as to its practical value in science, medicine, politics, law, and religion. Only fragments of this work remain,[1] but they are sufficient to indicate his view of the scope of the science, and the answer he was prepared to give some of its main problems at a time when he had not as yet realized what had been done by such writers as Mendelssohn and Kant to advance the science.

He still regards it as chiefly concerned with the syllogism, which is treated from the point of view of classification. "I think it important", he writes, "to impress the truth as strongly as possible that all logical reasoning is simply Classification, or adding to the common name, which designates the individuality and consequently the differences of things, the Generic name which expresses their resemblances." He even fails to note the distinction which the ordinary Logic makes between the Singular proposition in which an individual, and the Particular, in which "some" of a class, is the subject.[2] It is not surprising perhaps that on this basis the ordinary third figure (All M is P; all M is S ∴ Some S is P) is rejected as "a mere barren and identical proposition".[3] From this point of

[1] For these, see Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 53 foll.

[2] "Titius is a red-haired man is a Particular Proposition. Some men are red-haired is another particular." (Snyder, p. 148.)

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

view also the major premise becomes merely a summary of all the individuals that have been found to possess a certain character, among them the individual or group of individuals which is the subject of the conclusion. "In some part or other of every Syllogism we declare or imply the Character of the class, we assume that the Individual belongs to this class, and we conclude therefore that the Individual must have this Character." He seems to feel that this is to evacuate inference of something which it is usually thought to contain, namely a real advance to some fresh insight, for he goes on to ask, "But is not this merely repeating the same thing in other words? Some have thought so, and in consequence have asserted that all reasoning is made up of Identical Propositions." He admits that there is repetition, but denies that this is all. "In every Syllogism I do in reality repeat the same thing in other words, yet at the same time I do something more; I recall to my memory a multitude of other facts, and with them the important remembrance that they have all one or more property in common." It is this "recapitulation and, as it were, refreshment of its knowledge and of the operations by which it both acquires and retains it", that saves the soul of the syllogism.

The student of Mill's Logic will recognize an old friend in this proof that the syllogism is in reality a *petitio principii*: all that the major premise does being to record, as it were in shorthand, the particulars from which it is generalized, and that all

inference that is not founded on complete enumeration is by mere analogy. The best that can be said for Coleridge's attempt at this stage is that he perceived the fundamental importance of the study and was already struggling with what in the succeeding generation were to become real problems. That his answer to one so central as the ground of syllogistic inference should have been that which was afterwards given by a type of philosophy, which he himself was to exert the whole power of his genius to undermine, only shows how much had yet to be done by him in the development and unification of his own thought.

The part that the study of Kant had in that development has been already referred to. By the time the manuscript which bears the name of *Logic* came to be written, Coleridge had mastered the general teaching of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and through it arrived at an extended view of what was involved in the scientific treatment of the functions of thought, and at the same time of the limits of the science of Logic, when taken as concerned with the rules under which the understanding operates, whether considered abstractly or in connection with the concrete matter of experience. Besides the generalizing function of the mind in its commerce with experience, there is intuitive apprehension below it and a unifying organizing function above and beyond it.[1] By the time of which we are

[1] So little truth is there in Hort's remark (*Cambridge Essays*, London, 1856, p. 324): "Coleridge seems never to have distinctly asked what is the nature and province of logic", that his whole system may be

speaking, the distinction between these different forms of the exercise of thought, particularly that between Understanding and Reason, had become to him a fixed "frame of reference", which he applied to every subject that came within the range of philosophy, and no question goes deeper than that of its origin in his mind, the meaning he attached to it, and the relation of this meaning to that of the similar distinction in Kant. A complete answer to this question can only be given on a review of his philosophy as a whole. Here we are concerned with it as the basis of the scope he assigned to Logic.

2. Reason and Understanding

With regard to its origin, it has been commonly assumed that he took it over from Kant. As a matter of fact it had been before the world since the time of Plato, by whom different functions were assigned to *νοῦς* and *διάνοια*. In English writers, Shakespeare, Milton, Bacon, and the Cambridge Men,[1] we have the contrast between *discourse* of reason and the intuitive exercise of the faculty, and there is no need to question Coleridge's own statement that he found it there. All that Kant did in this case, as in others, was to confirm and give more definite form to what he had toiled out for himself. More important is the question of what he meant by it.

said to have rested on the clear convictions he had arrived at with regard to both.

[1] *Aids to Reflection*, Aphorism CVc, 9, cviii 3, and *passim*.

If we had merely the popular statements of the published works, we might suppose that it was merely an elaboration of the Platonic distinction between discursive and intuitive thought. There the understanding is defined as the "faculty of judging according to sense", that is of making generalizations from particulars given in perceptual experience, and of drawing inferences from them according to the formal laws of identity and non-contradiction.[1] As contrasted with this, reason is defined as the power of apprehending "truths above sense and having their evidence in themselves", among these the law of non-contradiction itself. Whether there ever was a time when this was all that the distinction meant to Coleridge or when he took it to be all that Kant meant, there is no need to inquire. The manuscript on *Logic* makes it quite clear that by the time it was written he had arrived, by the aid of Kant, at a far deeper apprehension of the relation of sense to understanding, and of understanding to reason in its wider and truer meaning.

Here sense is no longer spoken of as presenting us with the experience of objects from whose qualities abstraction is made, but rather as the undifferentiated background of experience, "the common or neutral boundary", as he calls it in the *Logic*, of objective and subjective.[2] Similarly

[1] In this capacity it is made the whipping-boy of prudence in morality, reliance on mere external evidence in theology, and pure expediency in politics.

[2] Long before (see *Anima Poetae* under date 1800), while his later doctrine was still forming itself in his mind, we have the aphorism,

with the Understanding. This is no longer conceived of as engaged in the discursive treatment of objects given by sense, but as a principle entering into the very constitution of the object, without which there could be no experience even of the most elementary kind. It is defined in so many words as "the substantiating power—that by which we attribute substance and reality to phenomena, and raise them from mere affections into objects communicable and capable of being anticipated and reasoned of". Thought in this sense is constitutive "even of the simplest objects. Points, lines, surfaces are not bodies but acts of the mind, the offspring of intellectual motions, having their canons in the imagination of the geometrician". Although we cannot say that all *entia logica* are objects, yet we can say that all objects are *entia logica.*[1] By this time, too, he is familiar with the Kantian doctrine of space and time as *a priori* forms of sense and of the Categories as the *a priori* principles of unity in the matter of experience, and finally with Kant's distinction between these forms and "ideas of the reason", the one concerned with phenomena, the other pointing to forms of unity that carry us beyond anything that can be verified in experience.

It is on this basis that Coleridge at the beginning of his treatise draws the distinction between

"The dim intelligence sees an absolute oneness, the perfectly clear intellect knowingly perceives it, distinction and plurality lie between". It might have been well if, in his later teaching, he had kept this admirable statement of the continuity of thought in the various levels of experience more clearly before him.

[1] *Logic*, ii. p. 396. (See Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 100.)

Logic, as the science of the understanding or logos, in which everything is relative to the distinction between subject and object, and of objects from one another, *Noetic*, or the science of Nous, as referring to that which is absolute and irrelative "because the ground of all relations", finally *Mathematics*, as standing between them, on the one hand starting from sensory intuition, on the other having a necessity and absoluteness founded on self-made postulates. Coleridge was convinced that in the end Logic, critical though it was itself, must submit to the higher criticism of Noetic, but he thought it possible to allow it provisionally to make its own assumptions as other sciences did—chiefly that of the independence of thought and its object—without raising the question of their ultimate validity.[1]

3. Division of Logic: the Canon

Taking Logic in this sense and distinguishing it from mathematics as based on concepts rather than sensory intuition, he further distinguishes between a narrower and a wider sense of the term according as it abstracts from the concrete matter of experience, and aims at stating the formal canons of reasoning, or includes a reference to the objects to which

[1] *Logic* MS., chap. i. We have a similar example of the attempt to work out the principles of Logic independently of a philosophical theory of the nature of truth in F. H. Bradley's book with that title. The difference is that, while Bradley only discovers in the course of his work that he is making this abstraction, Coleridge starts with the clear consciousness of it.

thought has to conform. But the important distinction is between both of these and the critical, or as he prefers to call it *judicial*, treatment of the understanding to which Kant led the way.

It would be manifestly unfair to take an unrevised copy of the manuscript of a portion of Coleridge's work on Logic as a final statement of his views. But there is sufficient, when taken with the confirmation which is elsewhere supplied, to provide material for an estimate of the extent to which the contents mark an advance in logical doctrine. If we look for any real advance on his own earlier treatment of pure or syllogistic logic, we shall, I think, be disappointed. Propositions are still treated from the side of classification. His division of what he calls "logical acts" into "clusion" or "seclusion" (all men are mortal), "inclusion" (Socrates is a man), and "conclusion" (Socrates is mortal) proceeds on the assumption that the syllogism is concerned with wider and narrower classes. Nor is there anything to indicate that he does not still regard the major premise as a mere appeal to the memory of acts of inclusion.[1] The best that can be said for this part of his exposition is that he recognizes that, if the analysis of the syllogism is all that logic means, it is but "a hollow science", and "a thousand syllogisms amount merely to nine hundred and ninety-nine superfluous illustrations of what a syllogism means".[2]

[1] The long illustration (Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 109) from the observation of the calcareousness of the whole of a common to that of a part previously included in it, proceeds on the old assumption as to the meaning of syllogistic inference.

[2] Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

It is only when we come to the section on the "Premises in all Logical Reasoning" in the later part of this section that he begins to throw off the trammels of the traditional scheme and to use his own insight. There is still little word of a logic of induction in the modern sense. The few masterly hints which Aristotle gives in the *Posterior Analytics* seem to have passed unnoticed by him, and it is another side of Bacon that interests him.[1] But at the point at which logic joins psychology in the act of perception, his unfailing sureness of touch in the latter science comes to his aid, and in the discussion of the question whether nature presents us with objects "perfect and as it were ready made", apart from any act of our own minds, he gives an answer which contains the root of the matter.[2]

After referring to the common experience that there is an education of the senses in perceiving aright, he goes on: "As there is a seeing and a hearing that belongs to all mankind, even so in the different kinds and species of knowledge there is a separate apprenticeship necessary for each. . . . In order to discuss aright the premises of any reasoning in distinction from the reasoning itself,

[1] In his notes on Mendelssohn's *Morgenstunden*, at the point where the author raises the question of imperfect and perfect Induction, Coleridge has nothing better to suggest than the need of a German word to indicate "my positiveness" as distinguished from objective "certainty".

[2] Cp. Snyder, pp. 116–18, where the passage is given at length with the comment upon it (p. 89): "Coleridge holds that perception is an art, dependent on the discipline of the senses and the development of organized bodies of knowledge". In the above quotation I have ventured to underline the important sentences.

a knowledge of the matter is the first and indispensable requisite. This may appear a truism, but, though equally certain, it is not equally obvious that the same necessity applies to the very means and acts, with and by which we acquire the materials of knowledge—*not only must we have some scheme or general outline of the object*, to which we could determine to direct our attention, were it only to have the power of recognizing it, or, as the phrase is, bring it under our cognizance when perceived; but *the very senses by which we are to perceive will each again require the aid of a previous* scientific insight. . . . So erroneous would the assertion be that an object of the sense is the same as the impression made on the senses, or that it would be possible to conceive an act of seeing wholly separate from the modification of the judgment and the analogies of previous experience." From this point of view he goes on to say it may be seen that "the main object of logical investigation is *most often the establishment of the object itself, which, once established, contains, or rather is coincident with its inferences*", and "we may therefore readily understand the observations of Lord Bacon respecting the insignificance of common Logic, and its utter inadequacy in the investigations of nature, and he might safely have added in those of the pure reason".

Readers familiar with the doctrine of appercipient groups in modern psychology, and with the place assigned by modern logic to the system of judgments, into which "facts" are taken up and remoulded

in inductive inference, will be prepared to see in such a statement an anticipation of principles that may be said in recent times to have revolutionized both sciences. What was needed was that Coleridge should have brought together what he here says about the scheme or system (the pervading identity, as we might say, or "concrete universal") underlying all real inference, with what he would fain have said about the major premise, as more than a jog to memory, and the syllogism as more than a *petitio principii*. That he failed clearly to see its implications as to the true nature of inference, or only accidentally touched upon them in the phrase about the "coincidence of the establishment of the object with its inferences", is only one of many instances of the unresolved conflict in his mind between what pressed upon him with the weight of tradition and what his own insight was constantly opening up to him.

4. Critical Logic: The Place of Judgment in General

The second part of the Logic nominally upon the "Criterion" opens with a discussion of rational and irrational questions,[1] leading to the demonstration that the question of a criterion of truth, as ordinarily put, belongs to the latter class. Truth in the sense of coincidence of thought with thing

[1] Largely taken from Mendelssohn, but leading to a different application. (See Alice D. Snyder, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, October 1921.)

must always be something particular corresponding to the particularity of the thing, whereas the criterion required must be a universal one. It is senseless to ask for the universal criterion of truth "when all truth is out of the question".[1] True, there is another sense in which the question might be asked, as referring to the *ground* of the coincidence as ordinarily assumed—the guarantee of "the identity of thing and thought". But in the first place "this was not the purpose of the question", and in the second place, we here introduce a reference to realities which are objects of First Philosophy (his own Noetic) not of Logic, and which "therefore cannot be submitted to a discussion or reasoning purely logical".[2] If not irrational in an absolute sense, the question is irrational from the point of view of the logic of the understanding.

If this interpretation be correct, what "Coleridge suddenly seems to realize" in this section is not, as Miss Snyder suggests,[3] that "he is giving a second criterion instead of the expected Organon", but that the whole question of a criterion is here out of place, and that what requires to be substituted for it is the proof that this is so, as that is contained in Kant's Transcendental Analysis, the effect of which has been to undermine the whole distinction between subject and object, as assumed by the ordinary logic. I agree that the retention of the title of the section is in that case highly misleading, but in the state in which the

[1] See Snyder, p. 86. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 87. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

work has come to us we have no reason to believe that these headings met with the author's final approval. Be this as it may, the interest of the rest of the *Logic* centres round the sketch that we here have (the first in English philosophy) of the logical bearing of the teaching of the *Critique*, and the special applications that are made of it to theories still current in contemporary thought, leading to the question of the extent to which the writer seems prepared to accept it as final.

The central points in Kant's analysis are the place of judgment in the structure of experience, the distinction he draws between analytic and synthetic judgments, and in the latter between synthetic *a posteriori* and *a priori*. Whatever doubt may be raised as to the first of these in Coleridge's popular works, there is no ambiguity here. Locke's definition of judgment as a comparison of an object with its marks is rejected as assuming the unity in the object, which is itself the result of judgment. "All judgments are functions of unity in our representations—official acts by which unity is effected among them." More particularly judgment is "the power of determining this or that under the condition of some rule", and as such the general condition of all rational consciousness. If it be said that this leaves it still doubtful whether Coleridge does not hold that "representations" give us objects, and that all that judgment does is to abstract from them as thus given, this might be true if the above were all he says about it.

We reach a further point when he goes on to

explain that underlying all rational consciousness there is a distinction between subject and object, the self and its world; and that "the resolution of any given representation (his word for the modern presentation or content) into the object and the subject and the coexistence of both in one we call a judgment. At least it is the first and most generalized definition of the term judgment which is most happily expressed in the Teutonic language by *Urtheil*". It is in this Urtheil that he finds "the Archimedes standing room, from which we may apply the lever of all our other intelligent functions whereby: (1) the mind affirms its own reality; (2) this reality is a unity; (3) the mind has the power of communicating this unity; and lastly all reality for the mind is derived from its own reality".

Carrying the same thought further in a later passage, he finds in the *copula* the assertion of a whole of reality beyond the division we make in judgment between the self and the world. "It contains a truth which, being antecedent to the act of reflection and, of course therefore to all other acts and functions of the understanding, asserts a being transcendent to the individual subject in all cases, and therefore to all subjects thinking under the same laws." He admits that, so interpreted, self-conscious experience seems to imply a contradiction between subject and object. On the one hand we have the judging mind, on the other we have an object which is "assumed to contain the principle of reality in itself exclusive

of, nay, in contradiction of, whatever is mind".[1] He himself holds that the contradiction is not an insoluble one. But he holds also that to find the clue to its solution we have to pass beyond the limits of the logic which proceeds on the assumption of the dualism of thought and its object.

Leaving this therefore for the present, and returning to the place of judgment in ordinary experience as above defined, Coleridge illustrates it by an acute criticism of Berkeley's form of idealism (or, as he calls it, his "psilo-phenomenism"). On Berkeley's view that the sole *esse* of things is the *percipi*, and that the *percipi* consists in the mere impression of the sense, we have no distinction between subject and object. Objects "would exist in the mind, for which they existed, no otherwise differenced from the same than as the waves from the collective sea". In fact "Berkeley ought to say, not I see a chair, but I see myself in the form of a chair".[2] His mistake consisted, as he elsewhere [3] explains, in failing to distinguish between sensation and developed perception: "As rationally might I assert a tree to be a bird as Berkeley's perception to be sensation, which is but a minimum—the lowest grade or first manifestation of perception. But the occasion of the error deserves notice, for

[1] The MS. here gives "not mind", which makes nonsense of the passage.

[2] *Logic* MS., vol. ii, in chapter on "synthetic judgments *a priori*", but the illustration from Berkeley is rather of the place of judgment in general in self-conscious experience.

[3] MS. C, p. 10. As the passage is not given in Miss Snyder's book, I have ventured to quote it at length as illustrative not only of his logical views, but of Coleridge at his best in philosophical criticism.

it applies to many other schemes besides the Berkeleian. Instead of resting at the real minimum, it was carried downward by the imagination, or rather by an act of the will, to the extinction of all *degrees*, and yet thought of as still *existing*. The true logic would in this case have been: perception diminishing from its minimum (in which it is called sensation) into an absolute O, sensation becomes = O; but no! this hypothetical subminimal perception, = O, is still somewhat . . . and this, the proper offspring of the unitive and substantiating function of the Understanding, is, by the imagination, projected into an *ens reale*, or, still more truly, a strange *ens hybridum* betwixt real and logical, and partaking of both: namely, it *is*, yet it is not as this or that, but as sensation per se; i.e. the *perceptum*, surviving its annihilation, borrows the name by which, in its least degree, it has been distinguished and commences a new genus without species or individual. . . . The error here noted is only one of a host that necessarily arise out of having only *one* starting-point, viz. the lowest."

The criticism throughout, and particularly in the last sentence, is one that goes to the root, not only of Berkeley's sensationalism, but of all forms of theory which seek to explain the higher and more developed phases, whether of knowledge or existence, in terms of the lower and less developed, and so ranks as a particularly lucid statement of what might be regarded as the fundamental principle of all later idealistic philosophy.

5. Synthetic Judgments

Equally with what he says on judgment in general, his account of the important distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments, and of the existence of the latter in a form underivable from experience, and rightly therefore called *a priori*, leaves little to be desired. Whether he would himself have admitted the existence of purely analytic judgments is not clear. In his treatment of formal logic he seems to take them for granted. On the other hand, his assertion that "predicates are intermediate marks", and that "every judgment by intermediate marks is a conclusion", combined with his rejection of "immediate" inference,[1] seems to point to a different view. But the important point is his recognition that both in mathematics and in physics, not to speak of metaphysics, the existence of these sciences depends on the existence of uniting elements (in the former case equations, in the latter causal connections), which cannot be derived from experience in the sense of being generalizations from it.

The clearest case is in mathematics. The synthesis of mathematics differs from that of physics and metaphysics in being conditioned from first to last by the pre-existing forms of sense, space and time as given to intuition. Coleridge follows Kant closely in his account of these forms, but lays more stress, first, upon the fact that they are given to intuition as *infinites*, into which, for the interpre-

[1] See Snyder, p. 84.

tation of experience, determinations are introduced by limitation; and, secondly, upon their *objectivity*, in the sense that they do not depend on the individual peculiarities of our minds. Whether they exist apart from the minds of finite individuals is a question which, as falling to Noetic, he does not here discuss. For the rest, what he regards as important is "to put the student in the way of proving for himself that all Mathematical reasoning is truly Synthetic or composed of synthetic judgments *a priori*", and thus to lead him to see that other synthetic judgments have similarly "their condition and ground in the *a priori* forms of the Understanding".[1] As the doctrine of the place of judgment in general is happily illustrated from the error of Berkeley, so that of synthetic *a priori* judgments is illustrated not less happily from that of Hume.

Hume's work in general Coleridge regards as a conspicuous illustration of "the many and important advantages which truth and science derive from strict consequence even in dangerous error".[2] It was the direct outcome of Berkeley: "Berkeley's remark that we ought to speak of signals not of causes is the essence of Hume's doctrine, which was a spark that cannot be said to have fallen on incombustible materials. It produced great heat and volumes of smoke, but kindled as little light as the former." To Hume's argument it was no use appealing to common sense. Hume was neither more deficient in common sense nor more likely

[1] Snyder, p. 94.

[2] *Logic*, ii. p. 300. (Snyder, pp. 93–4.)

to make himself ridiculous by outraging its dictates than Messrs. Reid, Oswald, Beattie or any other of his opponents on either side of the Tweed.[1] His opponents, in fact, had no idea of the depth of the problem. They "came forward not as investigators but as adversaries, who saw nothing in the subject that needed investigation". Instead of answering Hume, "they set up a Guy Faux (sic)". What therefore happened was that "the seed which Hume scattered was wafted and tossed about on the winds of literary rumour, or fell unprofitably, till it found at length a well-fitted and prepared soil in Kant".

Hume saw that "in judgments of causality the assertion of a necessary connection between A and B was not an analytic but a synthetic judgment, seeing that A is different from B; and asked by what right it is affirmed, and further by what right it was transferred from physics to metaphysics. His solution consisted in assigning the origin and ground of the notion and the necessity conceived therein to custom, habit, association." But this was in the first place to confound the conception of necessity as a positive and essential constituent of the conception of cause with a mere negative inability to do otherwise; in the second place it was to assign, as the cause of causality, phenomena which presuppose the principle; in the third place it was to fail to notice that experience, so far from engendering the conception of causality, rather acts as a check to the application of it, seeing that, with the unwary,

[1] *Logic*, ii. 305–6. (Snyder, p. 124.)

it is apt to flow in wherever it is not forbidden. Like breathing, in fact, it requires an express volition to suspend it. "This predisposition may be called into consciousness by occasion, but can no more be given by occasion than the form of oak can be given to the acorn by the air and light and moisture."

What blinded Hume to all this was not that he had wrongly assumed causal judgments to be synthetic, but that he had wrongly assumed that herein they differed from mathematical judgments, which he took to be purely analytic. Had he seen that these also were synthetic, and not, as he supposed, merely identical propositions, he could hardly have ventured to explain away their necessity as the result of subjective association. It was here that Kant may be said to have "begun anew and completed the work of Hume" by proving that mathematical, as well as physical and metaphysical, judgments involved a synthesis, and that, unless the very existence of the science which "hath made Earth's reasoning animal her lord" is to be denied, there must be an element in experience that was not derived from experience, as Hume interpreted it.[1]

[1] *Logic*, vol. ii. p. 281 foll. (Snyder, pp. 91–3.) I venture, however, to doubt the applicability, at this point, of her remark, "Here Coleridge parts company with Kant". His answer to Hume on the question of the necessity involved in causality is on all fours with Kant's. Where he might have here parted company with him, but did not, was by noting that Kant directed his criticism to the view Hume puts forward in the *Essays*, without being aware of the difference between it and that of the *Treatise*. (See E. Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. i. p. 256.)

6. Parting with Kant: The Principle of Trichotomy

Freshly put as all this is, neither here nor in his account of the different forms of synthesis in judgment, which Kant had tabulated as the Categories, is there any real advance on the teaching of the *Critique*. It is only when he comes to the negative side of it, the denial of the power of the speculative reason to transcend the limits of the logical understanding, that Coleridge refuses to follow. He had himself become convinced that logic, as commonly interpreted, was an abstract science in the sense that it was based on an assumption of the relation of subject to object, thought to thing, which it had not the means of examining. The first lesson therefore which it had to learn was to keep within its own limits: "the first source of falsehood in Logic was the abuse and misapplication of Logic itself".[1] It was sure to go wrong if, for instance, it presumed to attack this problem in its own strength, and tried to resolve everything into the object (as in the "Epicurean" philosophy), or again into the subject (as in the Berkeleian), or, still again, if it were dogmatically to deny that any theory was possible, and leave us with an insoluble dualism. It was here that, by the time from which the *Logic* dates, Coleridge had discovered that the limitations of Kant's analysis were to be looked for. While therefore, as he puts it, "considered as Logic it (the transcendental analysis) is irrefragable, as philo-

[1] Snyder, p. 87.

sophy it will be exempt from opposition, and cease to be questionable only when the soul of Aristotle shall have become one with the soul of Plato, when the men of *Talent* shall have all passed into the men of *Genius*, or the men of Genius have all sunk into men of Talent. That is *Graecis Calendis*, or when two Fridays meet." [1]

This is picturesquely expressed, but the meaning is clear, namely, that there is a level of thought beyond the transcendental analysis, to which the genius of Plato had penetrated, but which all the talent of Kant had failed to reach. For more detailed criticism of Kant's doctrine of experience we have to go elsewhere,[2] but he does not leave us in the *Logic* without a clear indication of what he regards as the source of his failure.

If Coleridge had been asked what he considered the most fatal of the errors of the older logic and the point at which he would begin its reformation, he would have said that it was the dogmatic assumption of the principle of *dichotomy*. Everywhere in it we have terms standing in stark opposition to each other without any attempt at mediation: affirmative-negative, universal-particular, unity-multiplicity, real-unreal; with the consequence that where one of them is conceived of as denoting something real and objective, the other is set down as denoting something ideal and subjective. But

[1] *Op. cit.*, xi. pp. 329–30. (Snyder, p. 125.)

[2] The most penetrating occurs in a marginal note in his own copy of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, under the modest heading, "Doubts during a first perusal, i.e. struggles felt, not arguments objected". See p. 91, below.

this, he held, is to contradict the very essence of reasoning itself, seeing that "the prime object of all reasoning is the reduction of the many to one and the restoration of particulars to that unity, by which alone they can participate in true being on the principle *omne ens unum*". To rely on the principle of dichotomy as final is therefore to leave us "with what is more truly eristic than logic. . . . If adopted as the only form of Logic, it excites and seems to sanction the delusive conceit of self-sufficiency in minds disposed to follow the clue of the argument at all hazards and whithersoever it threatens to lead them, if only they remain assured that the thread continues entire." But by its fruit you may know it. One of these is that "the inevitable result of all *consequent* reasoning, in which the speculative intellect refuses to acknowledge a higher or deeper ground than it can itself supply, is—and from Zeno the Eleatic to Spinoza ever has been—Pantheism, under one or other of its modes".[1] Needless to say that for Coleridge, to whom Pantheism was merely "a live Atheism",[2] this meant utter damnation.

When therefore in the *Logic* the question of dichotomy occurs, he is prepared to note Kant's attitude to it. He gives him, indeed, credit for the recognition of the higher principle of trichotomy in the triadic form in which the categories are arranged, and even speaks of this as "the prominent

[1] MS. B III (Snyder, pp. 128–9) and marginal note on Kant's *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte*. Cp. *Anima Poetae*, pp. 168–9 for other more immediate consequences in the shattering of "long deeply rooted associations or cherished opinions".

[2] MS. C, p 86.

excellence of his *Critique*". But he denies that it was Kant's discovery, or that Kant had any true appreciation of its significance. He attributes the discovery of it to Richard Baxter, who in his *Methodus Theologiae* not only employed it a century before the publication of Kant's work, but "saw more deeply into the grounds, nature, and necessity of this division as a *norma philosophiae*". "For Baxter", as he elsewhere explains, "*grounds* the necessity of trichotomy as the principle of real Logic on an absolute Idea presupposed in all intelligential acts, whereas Kant adopts it merely as a fact of reflection, though doubtless as a singular and curious fact in which he suspects some yet deeper Truth latent and hereafter to be discovered". Unfortunately "the sacred fire remained hid under the bushel of our good countryman's ample folios" —to be rescued, as Coleridge hoped, from its obscurity and blown into a warming and enlightening flame by himself.[1]

[1] MS. C. (See Snyder, p. 128 n.) The doctrine of trichotomy is only the logical statement of the metaphysical doctrine of "the law of polarity or essential dualism" which Coleridge conceived of as running through all nature, and in *The Friend* (vol. i. p. 121 n.) speaks of as "first promulgated by Heraclitus, 2,000 years afterwards republished and made the foundation both of Logic, of Physics, and of Metaphysics by Giordano Bruno". In a note elsewhere on Baxter he speaks of this law as necessarily involved in the polar logic. (*Literary Remains*, iv. 141.) That he is quite right in his view of the place of trichotomy in Kant is borne out by the fact, of which Professor H. J. Paton reminds me, that "it is only in the second edition of the *Kritique* that Kant makes his point about the Categories which reminds one of the Hegelian Dialectic. His other threefold divisions (e.g. sense, imagination, understanding) seem to arise from his tendency to make very sharp distinctions and then invent a third thing to bridge the gulf"—a very different thing from what either Hegel or Coleridge meant.

For the use which he was prepared to make of the principle we have to go beyond the limits not only of the ordinary but of the critical logic, seeing that the method which trichotomy prescribes is the opposite of that which underlies both. Instead of starting with opposing concepts, in one or other of which, taken separately, we are to find the truth, we have to "seek first for the Unity as the only source of Reality, and then for the two opposite yet correspondent forms by which it manifests itself. For it is an axiom of universal application that *manifestatio non datur nisi per alterum.* Instead therefore of affirmation and contradiction, the tools of dichotomic Logic, we have the three terms Identity, Thesis, and Antithesis."[1] It is on this principle that he conceived it possible to advance beyond the limitations of Logic or the science of the Understanding to a Noetic, or science of the Reason, which should also be a science of Reality.

Meantime, whatever the defects of his own contribution to logic in the narrower sense as it was left by him, he has the undoubted merit of being one of the first to recognize the importance of a method which proceeds, as he expresses it, by "enlargement" instead of by "exclusion",[2] and by

[1] Marginal note on Kant's *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte*, etc. It was part of Coleridge's exuberance to extend this triad into a tetrad (the Tetractys of Pythagoras) and even into a pentad—an extension which may here perhaps be neglected as belonging to the eccentricities rather than the essentials of his thought.

[2] See *Anima Poetae*, pp. 168 and 301, where he speaks of "the great good of such a revolution as alters not by exclusion but by enlargement", and of the pleasure he had derived from the adage, "extremes meet", through which he was able to bring "all prob-

inner development instead of by mere external synthesis.[1] It was late in life and only to a small extent that he became acquainted with Hegel's contemporaneous attempt to revolutionize logic precisely on this basis. Short as his marginalia on the *Wissenschaft der Logik* are,[2] they are of the greatest interest as the first real attempt of an English philosopher to grapple with the difficulties of the Hegelian dialectic. They anticipate the judgment that many after him were to repeat that the treatment of the transition Being—Not-Being—Becoming is "not dialectic, but sophistry". They differ from the kind of comment that was common during the next generation and beyond it, in being founded not on any supposed outrage on the law of non-contradiction (Coleridge's doctrine of polarity had carried him past all that), but on the abstractness with which he accuses Hegel of treating of the conception of not-being or nothing. "To be (sein, *εἶναι*) is opposed to the 'Nothing' (Nichts), whereas the true opposite of 'To be' is 'Not to be'." Nothing, in fact, is treated as objective, whereas it is "at all times subjective. Objective Nothing is not so truly non-ens and non-sens." Had Coleridge had the

lematic results to their solution and reduce apparent contraries to correspondent opposities . . . fragments of truth, false only by negation".

[1] A favourite example was of the mathematical point which unfolds itself in the line with its opposite poles. See MS. H, p. 49, where the principle is applied to the idea of Being as the pregnant unevolved point and the identity of the opposite, actual and potential; and pp. 167–8, where he claims as an advantage of his own term "prothesis" over "synthesis" that it emphasizes identity rather than mere union.

[2] They cover only the first ninety-one pages. See Snyder, p. 162 foll.

patience to read further, he might perhaps have seen, as no one for a generation was more capable of seeing, that abstraction from the distinction between the objective and the subjective, as something logically later, was of the essence of the Hegelian exposition at this stage. He might have seen also that, whatever else is to be said of the Hegelian philosophy, it was not "Spinozism in its superficial form", and had far more points of agreement than of conflict with his own.

Be this as it may, the coincidence on the subject of this section is sufficiently remarkable, and tempts one to imagine that there must have been something in the deeper spirit of the time which it was given to these two writers, so entirely different in genius and surroundings, to seize upon and express, each in his own peculiar way. How far Coleridge's use of the principle differed from Hegel's, and how far by the consistency of his results his use of it can be justified, it will be part of our occupation in this Study to determine.

CHAPTER III

METAPHYSICS

"Let me by all the labours of my life have answered but one end and taught as many as have in themselves the conditions of learning, the true import and legitimate use of the term Idea and the incalculable Value of Ideas (and therefore of Philosophy, which is but another name for the manifestation and application of Ideas) in *all* departments of Knowledge and their indispensable presence in the Sciences which have a worth as well as a Value to the Naturalist no less than to the Theologian, to the Statesman no less than to the Moralist."—MS. C, p. 33, condensed.

1. Coleridge's Criticism of Kant

Kant, Coleridge held, had introduced new matter into the old logic. He had enlarged its scope, but he had thereby only in the end brought into clearer evidence the limitations imposed upon it by the dualistic assumption of the independence of thought and reality, without himself being able to get beyond them. In effect his work had resulted only in riveting the chains more securely to this dualism. Yet he had indicated a way of deliverance in the hint of a new triadic logic, and Coleridge's own metaphysics may best be considered as an attempt to carry the dialectic of Kant's thought a step farther and turn criticism against the Critic. "Kant", he had said, "had begun again and completed the work of Hume." He himself aimed, if not at beginning Kant's work again, at any rate at beginning where Kant had ended and completing what he had begun. In attempting to follow him in what he regarded as the true "Prolegomena to

all future Metaphysics", it will therefore be useful to start from a more detailed account than we had occasion to give in the preceding chapter of his criticism of Kant, before going on to what he regarded as the central point in the advance he sought to make upon him, and the logic by which he endeavoured to justify it.

We have seen how far he assimilated the positive part of Kant's teaching. Freely stated, this amounted to the claim that not only the sciences, but the very existence of an objective world of fact depended on a natural metaphysic of the mind, demanding, or postulating, necessary connections between the dispersed elements of sensory experience. Thought was not an operation superinduced upon a given world, but was necessary in order that there might be an experiencible world of any kind. But Kant's teaching had a negative side. Necessary as these forms or postulates were for the constitution of experience, they were only valid within the limits of that experience. They were not applicable to the world of reality, of which our experience presented us with only the appearance or manifestation. That there was such a reality, revealed most decisively in the moral world and the freedom which was its postulate or condition, Kant never doubted. What he denied was the possibility of *knowing* it, seeing that knowledge was only possible under forms which were inapplicable to it. It was true that beyond the partial unities, which such forms of the understanding as these of causality and substance indicated, the mind was haunted by

ideals of a complete unity. It sought to bring the whole that was experienced, whether as object or as subject, or as the union of both, into a form in which it could be grasped as one. But these ideals were not to be taken as corresponding to any reality. They were useful as guiding, "regulative" principles, "ideas of the Reason", as Kant called them, borrowing so much from Plato, and as such distinguished from the concepts of the Understanding which entered into experience as constitutive of the apparent or phenomenal world; but beyond this they had no validity as a revelation of the real or noumenal world.

Coleridge accepted in the main the positive side of this teaching. But he was by no means satisfied that even here Kant had said the last word, and what he says of the form in which it was left by him is worth referring to, not only as anticipating much later criticism, but as containing the germ of his own rejection of the whole Kantian metaphysic. We fortunately possess in his marginal notes upon the text of the *Critique* an authentic record of his first reactions to it, which fuller knowledge was to confirm. The force with which Kant's authority weighed upon him at the time these notes were written is indicated by the modest title, "Struggles felt not arguments objected", which he gives to the chief one. Not the less does it go straight to the weak point of the whole analysis: the relation of the "manifold of sense" to the form-giving work of the understanding: "How", he asks, "can that be called a *mannigfaltiges ὑλή* which yet

contains in itself the ground why I apply one category to it rather than another? The mind does not resemble an Aeolian harp, not even a barrel-organ turned by a stream of water, conceived as many times mechanized as you like, but rather, as far as objects are concerned, a violin or other instrument of few strings yet vast compass, played on by a musician of genius. The breeze that blows across the Aeolian harp, the stream that turns the handle of a barrel organ, might be called a *mannigfaltiges*, a mere *sylva incondita*, but who would call the muscles and purpose of Linley a confused manifold?"

It was for this reason that he finds "a perpetual and unmoving cloud of darkness" hanging over Kant's work, which he goes on to attribute (surely rightly) to "the absence of any clear account of *Was ist Erfahrung?* What do you mean by a fact, an empiric reality, which alone can give solidity (Inhalt) to our conceptions? It seems from many passages that this indispensable test is itself previously manufactured by this very conceptive power, and that the whole not of our own making is the mere sensation of a mere manifold—in short, mere influx of motion, to use a physical metaphor. I apply the categoric forms of a tree. Well! but first what is this tree? How do I come by this tree?"

Coleridge has been criticized alternately for misunderstanding Kant and for accepting without demur the whole formal apparatus of the Kantian categories, but in criticisms like the above he shows that he has a better understanding of him than

many of his later critics, and that we have something that goes deeper than any objection he might have taken to the form of Kant's exposition. They amount to an arraignment of the whole Kantian analysis on the ground that the "indispensable test" of truth is not there found in anything objective, but in something "previously manufactured" by the conceptive faculty, and that the only thing that is "not of our making" is a "mere sensation which may be anything or nothing".

If we compare what is here said with the passage in the *Logic* already referred to, in which he indicates the chasm which the Kantian analysis of judgment left between subject and object, we can see in it the germ of his conviction that Kant had failed to solve this fundamental contradiction, and that the source of his failure lay in his denial of the power of the reason to pass beyond the distinctions of the understanding to the unity that underlies them and gives to them such reality as they possess. Kant saw rightly that the forms of the understanding with the abstractions they involved failed to give us the truth of things. But he did human reason an injustice in placing that truth in a noumenal reality which was wholly beyond its grasp, thus leaving it a prey to an unsolved contradiction. And the reason was that he had failed to follow the clue which his idea of a trichotomic logic had put into his hands. Had he followed this out, he would have reached a point of view from which he might have seen subject and object, not as contradictions, but as complementary aspects of

a being which unites them, because more than either.

It was this step that Coleridge was himself prepared to take, as he goes on in the same passage to explain, basing it on that which we must take as the definition of mind as subject. "There are many kinds of subject; *mind* is that kind which is its own object." Yet, if we confine ourselves to mind as we know it in ourselves, the contradiction remains, seeing that the subject which we know as thus object to itself is no self-subsistent being, as idealists like Fichte [1] would have it. We have therefore still to ask for the ground of its being. Descartes's method had been to start from the existence of the self, and show that on it rested all other truth: "as surely as I am, so surely this is". But this was to confuse the principle of knowledge with the principle of being, and contradictorily to assign absoluteness to the finite. Just as little can the principle of objective being be found in *all* subjects. Coleridge would have had nothing to say to the modern doctrine of "trans-subjective intercourse" as the ground of the object world. Percipient subjects, one and all, he held with the naïvest of realists, imply a *perceptum*. He goes beyond ordinary realism in demanding a real ground or ground-reality in the light of which both percipient and the perceived world shall have justice done to them, and which shall explain that strangest

[1] The criticism round which his marginal notes on Fichte's *Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800) turn is the ambiguity of the Ego in his system: "the equivoque of the word 'I' ".

and most challenging of all facts, the power of the first to respond to the second and of the second to satisfy the demands made upon it by the first in the name of coherence and unity. Was it possible to find any such ground and to justify it to the reason?

It was here that he found help in the older, and as he thought deeper, Platonic tradition, which Kant had erred by forsaking. The difference between them was that, while the emphasis in Kant was upon the conceptions of the understanding, into which the ideas of the reason entered only as regulative principles bereft of any substantiating power, in Plato the ideas were the underlying basis of the whole structure of knowledge, being not merely constitutive, but "productive". Hence, while to Kant philosophy meant the undermining of their influence over the mind, as guides to a real world beyond the phenomenal, to Plato all education was the preparation of the mind for their entrance into it and its domination by them.[1] Negative as the result of many of the Dialogues was, negative on the whole as older Platonism, in Coleridge's opinion, was, as compared with the later Neo-Platonism, everything in it was a training in the art of rising from the conceptions of the abstracting intelligence to the Ideas which are the real objects of knowledge. As he puts it:[2] "Kant supposed the Ideas to be oscillations of the same imagination, which, working determinately, pro-

[1] Cp. the motto on the title-page above from the *Principles of the Science of Method*, p. 44. In the passage which there follows he repeats what he says in *The Friend* of Bacon as the "British Plato".

[2] Note in his copy of Tennemann's *History of Philosophy*, vol. vi.

duces the mathematical intuitions, line, circle, etc., a sort of total impression made by successive constructions, each denied or negatived so soon as made, and yet the constructive power still beginning anew. Whereas, according to the true Platonic view, the Reason and Will are the Parent . . . and the Idea itself, the transcendent Analogon of the Imagination or spiritual intuition."

It was in this way that the true meaning of Ideas and the application of that meaning to the solution of the problems *first* of the nature of the ultimate reality in the World, *secondly* of man's relation to it in the different departments of human life was to Coleridge the chief occupation of philosophy. "The true import and legitimate use of Ideas" he declared to be "the most important lesson that philosophy has to teach"; philosophy itself he defines as "but another name for the manifestation and application of Ideas".

2. The Meaning of Ideas

Confining ourselves meantime to the first of these two questions, there is none which Coleridge's readers ask themselves oftener than what his "ideas of the Reason" really are. He was himself keenly alive to the difficulty, which his own distinction between them and conceptions of the Understanding seemed to have made insoluble, of finding a definition. How, he asks, teach the import without a definition? and how define without conceptions, which, just because they are con-

ceptions, must fail to convey the reality of the thing? To ask for a conception of an idea is like asking "for an image of a flavour or the odour of a strain of music". It is even worse; for between the different senses there is at least an analogy;[1] "but Ideas and Conceptions are utterly disparate, and Ideas and Images are the negatives of each other".[2] Even language, as Pythagoras and Plato had found, fails us for the expression of ideas. The early English Platonists had a standing resource in the contrast between the physical and the mathematical sciences, the former occupied with the temporary and contingent, the latter with the eternal and necessary. But Coleridge with truer insight (doubtless aided by Kant) saw that mathematical ideas, based as they were on sensory intuition, and depending on imaginative constructions, remained infected with the weakness of their origin, and offered no easy *gradus ad philosophiam*. In this difficulty the only resource was to try to define ideas: first, *negatively* by what they are not; second, *positively* by marking the function they all perform, as something at least which they have in common; and for the rest to trust to concrete examples.

[1] "A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere."

[2] See MS. C, p. 33 foll. (partly quoted Snyder, pp. 135–7), with which cp. the less reliable *Preliminary Treatise on Method*. It was for this reason, he quaintly notes (MS. C, p. 25), that "Plato could make nothing of Aristotle, that intellectual son of Anac (sic), whose understanding was a cloud between him and the Ideas of his great Master". The well-known Table Talk entry (July 2, 1830), "Every man is born an Aristotelian or a Platonist", etc., was to Coleridge a division into philosophical sheep and goats.

Negatively they are distinguished, not only from images and isolated conceptions, but from the systematized conceptions we call *theories*, which, as dependent on sense-given material, must always be liable to change as new sensory facts are disclosed. Nevertheless, scientific theory, in proportion to its advance, as illustrated in his own time by electric science, contrasted with "the vagaries of the magnetists", or modern chemistry, as contrasted with the older atomists, might approximate to the Idea by dropping all sensory imagery and taking the form of algebraic equations.[1]

Positively, and with reference to the common function of all Ideas, we have, as a distinguishing mark, the union in them of particular and universal. In their light the particulars are seen as the different individualized forms of a pervading identity or universal, which is the soul or individualizing principle of the particulars. Coleridge had not yet heard of Hegel's "concrete universal", or, if he had, does not refer to it; but he has the same thing in view. Seeking for a word to indicate the objective counterpart of such an identity or universal, he can find nothing better than "Law", which is itself defined as no mere synopsis of phenomena, but as "constitutive" of them, and "in the order of thought necessarily antecedent" to them—revealing fragments of the ideal world, which is thus distinguished "*not from the real, but from the phenomenal*".

[1] Cp. *The Friend*, Shedd's edition of *Works*, vol. ii. p. 436. In the present passage he goes so far as to ask whether the hypothetical atoms of physics are not merely symbols of algebraic relations "representing powers essentially united with proportions or dynamic ratios—ratios not of powers but that are powers".

But it is from the illustrations he here and elsewhere gives, particularly those from human life, that we get the clearest indication of his meaning. Life itself was a favourite illustration. "Take as an instance of an idea the continuity and coincident distinctness of nature: . . vegetable life always striving to be something that it is not, animal life to be itself." [1] In the history of human life, seeing that its aim is "to present that which is necessary as a whole consistently with the moral freedom of each particular act", he finds the "directing idea" to be the weaving of "a chain of necessity, the particular links of which are free acts". There is no reason to suppose that Coleridge was familiar with Kant's *Idea of a Universal History*, still less with Hegel's conception of History as the "realization of freedom", but, apart from ambiguous details, he would have welcomed these as illustrations on a grand scale of what he meant by a "directing Idea". But there was no need to go to general history to see ideas in being in human life. "You may see an Idea working in a man by watching his tastes and enjoyments, though he may hitherto have no consciousness of any other reasoning than that of conception and facts." For "All men live in the power of Ideas which work in them, though few live in their light".

[1] *Table Talk*, p. 57.

[2] It is for this reason, he adds, that "you may hope to produce an effect by referring (a man) to his own experience and by inducing him to institute an analysis of his own acts and states of being, that will prove the not only insufficing, but the *alien* nature of all abstractions and generalizations on the one hand, and the limits of the outward light upon the other".

Particularly illuminating, as we might expect, are the illustrations he draws from the field in which he was an acknowledged master. How interpret a poem, he asks, but by reference to the "charioteering genius" of the author, "the *mens poetae*, or rather *mens poeta*; the *vis vitae organica*"?[1] From the point of view of language itself "A man of genius, using a rich and expressive language (Greek, German, or English), is an excellent example of the ever individualizing process and dynamic being of Ideas. What a magnificent history of acts of individual minds, sanctioned by the collective mind of the country, a language is!"

Illuminating as these instances are, the reader is still inclined to ask what, after all, is the evidence for the existence of the object of the idea. If it is to come neither from sensory experience directly nor from the generalizations we make from its data and the inferences drawn from them, whence does it come? We seem to have only one alternative left, the old device of an appeal to innateness. That this was not Coleridge's solution ought by this time to be obvious. The doctrine of innate ideas was no part of the Platonic tradition to which

[1] In the *Preliminary Treatise on Method*, p. 41, he gives Shakespeare as the supreme example in literature of the ideal method. "In every one of his characters we find ourselves communing with the same human nature. Everywhere we find individuality, nowhere mere portraiture. The excellence of his productions is the union of the universal with the particular. But the universal is the Idea. Shakespeare therefore studied mankind in the Idea of the human race, and he followed out that Idea in all its varieties by a method which never failed to guide his steps aright." On the difference between this and what he says in *The Friend* (vol. iii. essay 4), see Snyder, *op. cit.*, pp. 34–5.

he adhered. By the great Cambridge writers of the seventeenth century to whom, in spite of what he regarded as their limitations,[1] he owed so much, it had been expressly repudiated.[2] So far from being established by Descartes, he held that it had been reduced to absurdity, by being connected with the "fanciful hypothesis" of "configurations of the brain which were as so many moulds to the influxes of the external world".[3] In so far as it seemed to be supported by Kant, it was just that which allied him to the form of idealism against which Coleridge's "spiritual realism" was directed. Yet the theory was so far right that it pointed to the configuration of the mind itself as endowed with "instincts and offices of Reason", which were essential elements in all experience, forcing it "to bring a unity into all our conceptions and several knowledges. On this all system depends; and without this we could reflect connectedly neither in nature nor on our own minds."[4] None the less the unifying idea has to be found as something rising out of experience and not something superimposed upon it.

The important point is that it is not to be found in any single object given to sense and reproducible in imagination, nor again in any generalization from selected aspects of the sense-given material. On the contrary, images and abstractions of this kind, if adhered to, may be obstructions to the rise

[1] See p. 30, above.
[2] See article by the present writer, "The Cambridge Platonists", *Mind*, N.S., vol. xxxvi. p. 172 n.
[3] *Biographia Literaria*, ch. v. n.
[4] *Aids to Reflection*, Aphorism XCVIIIc, 5.

in the mind of the unifying principle. Images have to be dissolved in the alembic of thought, and the abstractions of thought have themselves to be united and thus surmounted. What is required is openness of mind to the witness of the whole experienced fact, which is at the same time the witness of the whole experiencing mind. It is thus that such ideas as those above enumerated, *life*, the *mind* of the writer, the movement towards *freedom* in history, our own *deeper purposes*, rise in the mind, as something which is neither merely given from without nor as something merely imposed from within, but as something in which outer and inner are united, deep calling to deep in the self-evolution of truth.

But all that Coleridge says of the meaning, the source and the operation of ideas in general only leads up to what he has to say of the idea of the *ens realissimum*—that in the light of which, as the ground of all other realities, all other ideas must be seen, if we are to see them in their unity and therefore in their truth. What is this Idea? and by what logic can we establish the existence of the object corresponding to it?

3. The Idea Idearum

"The grand problem", he wrote in *The Friend*, "the solution of which forms the final object and distinctive character of philosophy, is this: for all that exists conditionally (that is, the existence of which is inconceivable except under the conditions of its dependency on some other as its antecedent)

to find a ground that is unconditioned and absolute, and thereby to reduce the aggregate of human knowledge to a system". That we have the idea of such a ground Coleridge held to be indisputable, seeing that in addition to the permanent relations, which we call laws, and which it is the aim of the sciences to discover as the ground of phenomena, we have the idea of a permanent relation between the world and ourselves, a "ground common to the world and man", forming "the link or mordant by which philosophy becomes scientific and the sciences philosophical".[1] It is further indisputable that this idea is constantly finding support in experience, and in the coincidence of what we seek with what we find—in other words of reason with experience. But the question remains of the nature of this ground and the nature of the reasoning, by which it can be proved to possess that nature.

Needless at this stage to say, it is not anything that we can reach by induction. "If we use only the discursive reason we must be driven from ground to ground, each of which would cease to be a ground the moment we pressed in it. We either must be whirled down the gulf of an infinite series, thus making our reason baffle the end and purpose of all reason, namely unity and system, or we must break off the series arbitrarily and affirm an absolute something which is *causa sui*."[2] What those who adopt this line of argument fail to see is that

[1] *The Friend*, Shedd, vol. ii. p. 420.

[2] *Biographia Literaria*, xii—one of the passages supposed to be plagiarized from Schelling. In proof that here at least Coleridge begged *in forma divitis* we have the vivacious statement of the same

causality is a subordinate form of the human understanding under the more comprehensive one of reciprocal action, and therefore inadequate as a description of the supreme reality.[1] The idea of a *causa sui* sets us indeed on the right track, for this means a break with the logic of the understanding; but, interpreted as this was by Spinoza and others, it turns out to be no cause at all, seeing that we know nothing of anything that is causative of reality except self-conscious will.[2] It is thus the presence and priority of the will both in human and in the universal consciousness that Coleridge becomes more and more concerned to demonstrate, and it is for the additional light which his manuscript remains throw upon what he says of this in his published works [3] that they possess their chief philosophical value.

argument in MS. C, p. 45: "What our Priestleian Metaphysics call necessity is but an empirical scheme of destroying one contingency with another which is to be treated in the same manner . . the unconquerable Foe, retreating step by step and still facing the Pursuer . . the contingency playing at leap-frog vaults backwards. As if History could be thus explained; as if the motives of action were not a part of the action. Here comes the head and the neck of the Horse; but what was behind? The Tail: Ergo the Tail pushed the Head and Neck forward."

[1] See MS. H, p. 170 n., where he tells us that the very epithet "first cause," as applied to the Supreme, is borrowed from the cosmotheism of the Pagans, to whom God was one with the world.

[2] Cp. the notes on Mendelssohn's *Morgenstunden*, where he rejects the latter's criticism of Spinoza that his God is merely a collective notion: "The defect in Spinoza's System is the impersonality of God—he makes the only Substance a *Thing*, not a *Will*—a *Ground solely* and at no time a *Cause*."

[3] E.g. in the *Preliminary Treatise on Method*: "The first preconception or master-thought of our *plan* rests on the moral origin and tendency of all true Science", the first clear statement perhaps in English Philosophy of what might be called Ethical Pragmatism.

"It is at once the distinctive and constitutive basis of my philosophy", he writes in a singularly direct passage,[1] that I place the ground and genesis of my system, not, as others, in a fact impressed, much less in a generalization from facts collectively, least of all in an abstraction embodied in an hypothesis, in which the pretended solution is most often but a repetition of the problem in disguise. In contradiction to this, I place my principle in an *act*—in the language of grammarians I begin with the verb—but," he adds emphatically, "the act involves its reality." How can this implication of reality be proved?

4. How the Idea can Involve Reality

Kant denied that there was any passage by way of the speculative or logical reason from one to the other; but Coleridge had already fought his way by his principle of trichotomy beyond the limitations of Kantian logic. The defect, he writes,[2] of Kant's doctrine was that it failed to apply trichotomy to the attributes of the *ὑπερούσιον*, and did not see that these were united and realized in the idea of an absolute will. He was thus prepared to appeal to a wider and, as he thought, a deeper logic. In a note upon the criticism which the Kantian historian Tennemann passes upon Plotinus, he comes to the defence of the Neo-Platonist, and attributes to him "the statement in his most

[1] MS. B III.

[2] MS. H, p. 162 n.

beautiful language of the only possible form of philosophic Realism", along with "the demonstration of it by one of the most masterly pieces of exhaustive logic found in ancient or modern writings".[1] The principle, he has to explain, of this "Plotinian Logic", which Tennemann, in his blind adherence to Kant, had "so cavalierly kicked out of the ring", is the simple one that whatever is necessary to the possibility of a given reality must itself be real. More formally and fully stated: "If A relatively to X is known to be = W; and if no cause or reason actual or conceptual can be assigned why it should not be the same (i.e. = W) relatively to Y and Z; and if, supposing A = W in reference to Y and Z, the consequences in *reason* are found in exact correspondence to several important phenomena, which without this supposition must remain anomalies and inexplicable, can the assumption that A = WX is likewise equal WYZ be justly declared altogether groundless and arbitrary?"

Coleridge has been constantly accused of appealing to "intuition" in support of his metaphysical conclusions. It is all the more significant that in this crucial passage he expressly rejects what appears in Plotinus to be an appeal to "intellectual intuition", if that is interpreted to mean "gazing

[1] Marginal note in vol. vi. p. 64 of Tennemann's *Geschichte der Philosophie*: "Let the attempt of Plotinus have ended in failure," he goes on, "yet who could see the courage and skill, with which he seizes the reins and vaults into the chariot of the sun, without sharing his enthusiasm and taking honour to the human mind even to have fallen from such magnificent daring?"

in imagination upon Being as a vast Panorama". But this, he holds, is not the essence of his teaching. What Plotinus really meant was that "a knowledge of Ideas is a constant process of involution and evolution, different from the concepts of the understanding in this respect only that no reason can be brought for the affirmation, because it *is* reason. The soul (for example) contemplates its principle (which is) the universal in itself, as a particular, i.e. knows that this truth is *involved* and *vice versa evolves itself from its principle.*" Accepting then this "evolutionary" logic, the whole question resolves itself into that of filling in the terms of the formula: finding, that is, the reality (X), what knows it (A), and what it knows it *as* (W), finally what is involved in the known reality X (Y + Z).

Though rejecting Kant's logic, Coleridge had long ago accepted what was the basis of his ethics, and his point of contact with noumenal reality, namely, the categorical imperative, as the sense of responsibility to something beyond the self, made known to us in conscience. What dissatisfied him in Kant was *first* the treatment of this as merely a mode of our *volitional* consciousness, instead of as the foundation of all consciousness, and presupposed in it; and *secondly* the attempt to isolate it from other elements and interests of human nature, coupled with the refusal to admit it as the basis of a speculative argument. His own spiritual realism, on the other hand, depended precisely on the power to get beyond these limitations.

It is in disproof of the former of these mistakes

that he tries to show at a critical point of the argument in MS. B II, and in closely reasoned sequence (i) that consciousness in the proper sense of the word involves self-consciousness; (ii) that this in turn involves the consciousness of an other than self—a thou, a he, or an it; (iii) that, in distinguishing between self and other, we also unite or identify them, not, indeed, in the sense of obliterating the numerical difference, but in the sense of assigning them equal rights; (iv) that "the becoming conscious of a conscience" partakes of the nature of an act—"an act, namely, in which and by which we take upon ourselves an allegiance, and consequently the obligation of Fealty"; and finally that "the equation of the 'thou' with the 'I' by means of a free act, by which we negative the sameness in order to establish the equality, is the true definition of the conscience".

It is on the ground of the existence of this "fealty", as a fundamental fact in human nature, alone that Coleridge believes it possible to bridge the gulf which separated the finite from the Infinite. "From whichever of the two points the reason may start: from the things that are seen to the One Invisible, or from the Idea of the absolute One to the things that are seen, it will find a chasm, which the *moral* being only, which the spirit and religion of man alone, can fill up or overbridge."[1] All other arguments *either*, like that from design, assume moral attributes in the Infinite,[2] *or*, like that from the existence of law in Nature, leave them out of it

[1] MS. B III.

[2] See below.

and so deprive it of any religious significance. It was for this reason, he held, that "all the sounder schoolmen and the first fathers of the Reformation with one consent place the origin of the Idea in the Reason, the ground of its reality in the conscience, and the confirmation and progressive development (of it) in the order and harmony of the visible world". He would have admitted (he elsewhere constantly does) that there still was a "leap", but he would have insisted that it was open to demonstration that the leap was not an irrational one in the sense of leaving us with open contradiction, and therefore with mystery. On the contrary he held that we find in it the solution of the mystery which the world would *otherwise* be. "The world", in fact, "in its relation to the human soul is a mystery of which God is the only solution." [1]

Returning to the Plotinian formula, we can now see the ground on which Coleridge was prepared to fill in the terms and claim it as not only the foundation stone, but the only possible one of "philosophic Realism". "Let A", he goes on in continuation of the former quotation, "represent the Reason in Man, speculative and practical, let W stand for a knowledge, both the form and contents of which the Reason derives from itself; let X signify the Categorical Imperative of Kant; Y the absolute W, and Z the universal Reason (Y + Z = God). Then A has W, for it is realized in X. But W in X would be W (i.e. the rational knowledge would be irrational) without Y and Z. The

[1] *Lay Sermon*, Appendix C.

Idea X therefore involves the Ideas Y and Z, and the knowledge of the reality of X gives an equivalent knowledge of the reality of Y and Z."

5. Coleridge's Theological Platonism

Formal, even pedantic, as it may seem, there can be no doubt as to the central importance Coleridge attaches to this argument. In the passage from which the above quotations are taken he repeats it in several forms, and, as if to leave no mistake, adds a Synopsis of it, as "*an argumentum ad hominem*" in reply to Tennemann's criticism of it. With regard to its general form, we may be prepared to share some of Coleridge's enthusiasm for it, if we are prepared to find in it an anticipation of the principle, of which later idealists, notably Bradley, have made so much, that "what is necessary and at the same time possible must be real". On the other hand, subtle and I believe original as his application of the argument is, as an attempt to establish a voluntaristic form of idealism, or as he preferred to call it "spiritual realism", at a level which similar modern attempts seldom attain, as stated by him it raises obvious difficulties not only from the formal side, but from the side of the material conclusion.

(1) After all that he has said to discredit the appeal to Logic upon final issues, why, we might ask, this anxiety to make his peace with her when it comes to real business? Without attempting to defend all that he anywhere says of the relation

between truths of the reason and logical *reasoning*, I believe that the question is capable of an answer consistent with his general view of the relation between them. Though distinguishable as higher and lower, there was in Coleridge's view no break of continuity between reason and understanding. As the laws of gravitation held as much for living as for dead things, the laws of thought hold as much for "productive" reason as for the merely "constitutive" understanding. The union of apparent opposites, which it is the function of the higher power to effect, is itself inspired by the demand for a "consistent" view of the object. These have to be united so as to escape contradiction. So far from real and logical truth being different, all truth in the end must be logical truth. Coleridge would have agreed with Bosanquet's aphorism that "logical exactitude in the full sense of the word is not a deadening but a vitalizing quality". What was required in the case of the establishment of the above ultimate metaphysical truth was not to break away from fact and its logical implications and appeal to a non-logical intuition, but to give fuller recognition first to the actual fact (the reality of the moral law in man's mind), and secondly to what was logically implied in it (the existence of a moral law, and therewith of a Lawgiver, in the world at large). The reconciliation of the existence of such a Lawgiver with other facts of the world—physical necessity, the existence of evil, individual responsibility—raised further questions which it was the business of

philosophy to try to answer, and which it could only answer satisfyingly by the elimination of logical contradiction between these facts and the alleged ground of them.

(2) The difficulty raised by the material conclusion of the priority of Will to Existence—more generally of Act to Being—is a more serious one. Can will be conceived of except in relation to a world already there? Must not "act" be an effluence from being and not *vice versa*? Coleridge was himself keenly alive to this difficulty, and in MS. B tries to meet it, first by defining the priority which is claimed for the Will as purely a logical one; and secondly by showing that logical priority follows from the idea of the will itself.

Temporal relations, he insists, are inapplicable to the Absolute. Even though we conceive of will as a cause, causality itself transcends time, seeing that it merges, as we have seen, in the idea of interaction, in which cause and effect must be conceived of as contemporaneous. Attributed to the Supreme Reality, causality must therefore mean co-eternity. But he adds that it is a co-eternity in which will must be conceived of as the more fundamental factor, seeing that its very essence is to be causative of reality; to reverse this and make it a product is to destroy it as will. On the other hand, there is nothing in the conception of being which is exclusive of that of product. "So far, indeed, is the idea of co-eternal consequent from involving any rational inconceivability, that all the ancient philosophers, who, like Aristotle, asserted

a Deity, but denied a creation in time, on the ground that communicativeness is an essential attribute of the Deity, admitted this in a far harsher form, for they asserted the world to be a co-eternal effect."

For himself he denies the adequacy of the whole conception of causality to express the idea of the Will, and, falling back again on Plotinus, but with a difference, goes on to explain what has to be substituted for it. This he finds in the idea of "an infinite fullness poured out into an infinite capacity . . . a self wholly and adequately repeated, yet so that the very repetition contains the distinction from the primary act, a self which in both is self-subsistent and is not the same, because the only 'only' is self-originated".

Coleridge's relation to the New Platonic philosophy has often been discussed, and as often misrepresented. We have seen how early and deeply he was impressed with its affinity to the speculative ideas, and particularly to the doctrine of the Trinity, which had become part and parcel of Christian theology. In the passages just quoted from MS. B we have a clear indication of the extent both of his agreement and of his disagreement with it. But the question is put beyond all doubt by a passage in the Huntington Library manuscript, in which he institutes a direct comparison between the Neo-Platonic scheme and his own.[1]

While prepared, as we have just seen, to adopt the Plotinian conception of the Absolute as an

[1] MS. H, p. 151 foll.

infinite power pouring itself forth like the sun as from an inexhaustible fullness, he could not accept the details of the emanation theory as an adequate counterpart, far less as the source of the Christian doctrine, and submits it to a trenchant and, so far as his own views are concerned, an illuminating criticism. He is careful at the outset to separate it from anything that could be attributed to Plato, who, he had convinced himself, does not expound, and never intended to expound, his own esoteric philosophy in the *Dialogues*. It was developed by the later Platonists in defiance of the express warning of Plato's own immediate successor Speusippus, that the true order of the process of the Absolute was not The Good, Reason, and Soul, each identical in essence with the other, but The One, Reason, and the Good, each with a nature of its own.[1]

Passing over this difference of order, he finds a deeper objection to it in the attempt to define the supreme reality by a string of negatives as that which neither "acts", nor "thinks", nor even "is". Coleridge had thought much on the logical principle of negation,[2] and saw clearly that all intelligent negation presupposes a positive idea. Yet this is what seems to be denied in the Plotinian scheme, with the result that the idea of the Good is left quite indeterminate as a "reverential epithet", instead of being seen necessarily to involve intelli-

[1] The passages on which Coleridge seems to have relied are Aristotle, *Metaph.*, bk. vii. ch. 2 (Eng. tr. 1028b), and Stobaeus, *Eclogae* i. 58. See Ritter and Preller, *Historia Graecae Philosophiae*, 7th ed., pp. 284–5).

[2] See Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

gence and action, not to speak of being. But the chief speculative defect of the scheme is the attachment of inferiority to reason and soul as more distant emanations of the Good. Whence the inferiority? If the First be an Infinite, it must have infinite effects. In a word, Emanation assumes the possibility of a fragmentary Deity, a diluted Godhead.

Serious finally as are the speculative difficulties, the moral consequences are more serious still. For in this scheme good and evil lose all qualitative distinction, and appear as mere differences in degree of being. *Either* the idea of guilt and responsibility is altogether denied, *or* crime and evil (as mere facts) increase as guilt or the sense of them (by the degradation of Reason) diminishes.

While the modern reader would have been sorry to miss this criticism and the light it throws upon Coleridge's own doctrine of the supreme Will and its "alterity" as equivalent respectively to God the Father of the Filial Word, he will be apt to find in this theological extension of Coleridge's metaphysics a revival of what is most mediaeval, and perhaps repulsive, in English Platonism. It is, indeed, impossible to disguise in Coleridge's metaphysics the use of language that seems to subordinate philosophical doctrine to theological dogma. "The doctrine of Ideas", he writes in connection with the above exposition of it, "is antecedent, but only because ancillary, to the more important truths, by which religion rises above philosophy." But we should show an imperfect appreciation of the power

of speculative truth to break through the swaddling-bands of theological dogma if we were to exaggerate the extent to which apologetic interests at this point vitiate Coleridge's results.

The stream of Greek philosophy, starting from Socrates and Plato in an atmosphere of open and untrammelled thought, had flowed for five centuries, gaining in depth, if not in clarity, from the religious interest which more and more mingled with it, and finally made itself felt in its full force in Plotinus, its "second founder". It was impossible that any one, who had inherited its leading constructive ideas and even a small portion of its free spirit, should seek merely to adapt particular parts of it, least of all what to Plato at least was only a myth or at best a "probable story", to dogmatic matter imported from alien sources. These in moments of weakness or in an atmosphere of conservative tradition might claim from Coleridge undue consideration, and even tempt him to what looks like compromise. But in a mind like his, in which speculative truth was the dominant and absorbing intellectual interest, it was these dogmas, we may believe, and not the great ideas to which it had committed itself for guidance, that had to submit to purification and reconstruction; and it is not surprising that to the most penetrating of his critics in the succeeding generation, among them John Henry Newman,[1] this should have appeared

[1] Newman speaks of him as one who "indulged a liberty of speculation which no Christian can tolerate, and advocated conclusions which were often heathen rather than Christian". *Essays*, vol. i. p. 269, quoted Benn, *Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, i. 270.

to be the result. Even in the above passage, while severely critical of Neo-Platonism, he shows himself anxious to save the reputation of Plato himself, and he would have distrusted any gloss upon his thought that seemed to depart from the essential sanity of the Master.

However this may be, we find Coleridge under no delusion as to what he was trying to accomplish in the exposition of the metaphysical basis of his system which we have been considering. He states it in so many words to be the offering of proof, *first* that it is possible to form an idea, consistent with all other truths, respecting the Supreme reality; *secondly* that such an idea is found in that of an Absolute Will; and *thirdly* that we have here something from which we are free to advance and to show, if we can, the sufficiency of the account to satisfy the demands made on it in the name of reason and experience. The main issue raised by his metaphysics is not Plotinus *versus* Kant, still less philosophy *versus* Christian mysticism, but the sufficiency of a theory that founds itself on the idea of the Absolute as Will. If the central line of English idealistic thought in the nineteenth century, under Hegel's influence, was destined for two generations to move in an apparently different direction, the fact of the somewhat violent reaction against it and all its works, which marks the present time, bears witness to the vitality and inherent attractiveness of the voluntaristic form of idealistic philosophy, of which Coleridge was the founder, and remains to this day the most distinguished representative.

CHAPTER IV

PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE

"In order to the recognition of himself in nature man must first learn to comprehend nature in himself and its laws as the ground of his own existence."—*The Friend.*

1. Coleridge's Interest in Science

In the *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge tells us of the powerful effect upon his mind of Schelling's *Natur-Philosophie*. But after his disillusionment with Schelling, Nature-Philosophy became for him the suspicious name for a mode of thought that inevitably led to a spiritless pantheism. Yet, if this was to be met, it must be by a more adequate conception of nature as no mere finished and dead product (*natura naturata*), but as a living and creative principle (*natura naturans*).

The general intellectual atmosphere seemed favourable for this advance. The materialism with which early Platonists like Cudworth had found themselves confronted in the works of Hobbes and some of the Cartesians, was still a menace, but by the end of the eighteenth century it showed signs of having run its course. Leibnizian conceptions were exercising a powerful influence in the opposite direction. In 1747 appeared Kant's *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces*,[1] which had struck the note of a "dynamic" philosophy. His theory of knowledge, in which the material world as known

[1] Alluded to by Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, "Conclusion", 14 n.

to science was shown to be a construction of the mind, had undermined the ordinary arguments for materialism as a philosophical system. Biology had begun to come to its own, and the doctrine of the dependence of organic structure on a prior principle of life was being taught in high places by Dr. John Hunter (1728–93). In the early years of the new century controversy raged between his followers led by Dr. John Abernethy and their critics.

It was impossible for Coleridge to be a passive spectator of this war of ideas. He had been interested in scientific, and especially in medical investigations from early childhood, first through his brother Luke,[1] afterwards through attendance at Blumenbach's lectures in Germany, and through his friendship with Humphry Davy and his many contacts with members of the medical profession.[2] Needless to say, he was an ardent supporter of the Dynamic Philosophy. In it he saw his own dream of finding the material world, not less than the spiritual, the expression of an Idea. For this reason, if it is not quite fair to say with Miss Snyder that his concern with science was merely "the effort of a philosophic partisan to justify his philosophical position", we may agree that "there can be no adequate account of the making of his metaphysical system—the

[1] Whose medical books he read and with whom he went round the wards of the London Hospital. See Campbell's *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, p. 12.

[2] Miss Snyder has given a scholarly account of his relations with these at various periods of his life and of the controversial atmosphere in which his own *Theory of Life* was written. *Op. cit.*, pp. 16 foll.

influences exercised by the Neo-Platonists, the English divines, the German Natur-Philosophen—that does not recognize his participation in contemporary scientific discussions, and his sense of their philosophic implications".[1]

The reader of *The Friend* is familiar with the illustrations he draws from the views of some of the writers mentioned above;[2] but it is to the posthumous essay, *Hints toward the Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life*[3] that we must go for the most systematic statement of his views. In *The Friend* he had already expressed dissatisfaction with Hunter's presentation of the idea of life.[4] Hunter seems as a matter of fact to have left it open to suppose that life was merely a superimposed or emergent property of matter, which had reached through purely physical influences a particular degree of refinement and organization.[5]

Accordingly, at the beginning of the essay, after a reference to "the undeniable obscurities and

[1] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 30 and 22.

[2] E.g. vol. iii, section ii, Essays vi, vii, and ix.

[3] Edited by Seth B. Watson, 1848. On the controversy as to the editor's view of it as the joint production of Coleridge and Dr. Gillman, see Snyder, *ibid.*, pp. 16 and 17.

[4] *Loc. cit.*, Essay vii. "In his printed works the one directing thought seems evermore to flit before him, twice or thrice only to have been seized; and after a momentary detention to have been again let go: as if the words of the charm had been incomplete and it had appeared at its own will only to mock his calling." Cp. what he says of him, *Principles of the Science of Method*, p. 41.

[5] Asked by a pupil whether his theory did not make for the exploded doctrine of equivocal generation, Hunter is said to have replied, "Perhaps it does. I do not deny that equivocal generation happens. There are positive proofs neither for nor against its taking place." Article John Hunter, *Encl. Brit.* (ed. ix), p. 391.

apparent contradictions" to be found in Hunter's works, Coleridge defines his aim as "to climb up on his shoulders and look at the same objects in a distincter form, because seen from the more commanding point of view furnished by himself".

2. The Idea of Nature

We are now familiar with this "more commanding point of view" in his general metaphysical theory. To what has already been said about it we may here add a reference to one or two manuscript passages (probably of earlier date than the Essay) in which he develops the concept, or, as he prefers to call it, the "Idea" of Nature, with particular lucidity in accordance with it.

"Wonderful", he writes,[1] "are the efforts of Nature to reconcile chasm with continuity, to vault and nevertheless to glide, though in truth the continuity alone belongs to Nature, the chasms are the effect of a higher principle, limiting the duration and regulating the retention of the products. From the Vermes to the Mammalia, Organic Nature is in every class and everywhere tending to Individuality; but Individuality actually commences in Man. This and many other problems must find their solution in the right 'Idea of Nature'."

Following the sense, but preceding the date of this entry, we have a still fuller statement of the general point of view from which he would have

[1] MS. C, p. 117.

Nature regarded. "The true object of Natural Philosophy is to discover a central Phaenomenon in Nature, and a central Phaen(omenon) in Nature requires and supposes a central Thought in the Mind. The *Notional* Boundaries or *Ne plus ultras* of Nature are a part that relatively to no minor particles is a Whole, i.e. an Atom: and a Whole, which in no relation is a Part, i.e. a Universe. The System of Epicurus is that a finite Universe composed of Atoms is notionally true. But it expresses the limits and necessities of the human imagination and understanding, not the truth of Nature. An atom and a finite Universe are both alike Fictions of Mind, *entia logica*. Nevertheless, not the Imagination alone, but the Reason requires a Centre. It is a necessary Postulate of Science. That therefore which can be found nowhere absolutely and exclusively must be imagined everywhere relatively and partially. Hence the law of Bicentrality, i.e. that every Whole, whether without parts or composed of parts, and, in the former, whether without parts by defect or lowness of Nature (= a material atom), or without parts by the excellence of its Nature (= a Monad or Spirit), must be conceived as a possible centre in itself, and at the same time as having a centre out of itself and common to it with all other parts of the same System. Now the first and fundamental Postulate of Universal Physiology, comprising both organic and inorganic Nature—or the fundamental position of the *Philosophy* of Physics and Physiology—is: that there is in Nature a tendency to realize this

possibility, wherever the conditions exist: and the first problem of this Branch of Science is, What are the conditions under which a Unit having a centre in the distance can manifest its own centrality, i.e. be the centre of a system and (as, in dynamics, the power of the centre acts in every point of the area contained in the circumference), be the centre and the *copula* (*principium unitatis in unoquoque Toto*) of a System. Such a Unit would have three characters:

1. It would be a component part of a System, having a centre out of itself, or, to use a geometrical metaphor, it would be a point in some one of the concentrical lines composing a common circle.

2. It would be itself the centre and copula, the attractive and cohesive force, of a system of its own.

3. *For itself* (as far as it exists *for* itself), it would be the centre of the Universe in a perpetual tendency to include whatever else exists relatively to it in itself, and what it could not include, to repel. Whatever is not contained in the System, of which it is the centre and copula, either does not exist at all *for* it or exists as an Alien, which it resists, and in resisting either appropriates (digestion, assimilation), or repels, or ceases to be, i.e. dies.

These three characters concur in every living body, and hence there necessarily arise two directions of the contemplative act. The Philosopher may either regard any body or number of bodies in reference to a common centre, the action of which centre constitutes the General Laws of the

System; in *this* view all Bodies are contemplated as inanimate—and these, in which he can discover none of the *conditions* indispensable to the Body's being contemplated in any other view, he considers as positively inanimate; and the aggregate of these we call inorganic Nature. Or he may contemplate a Body as containing its centre or principle of Unity in itself: and, as soon as he ascertains the existence of the conditions requisite to the manifestation of such a principle, he supposes Life and these bodies collectively are named Organic Nature. In Nature there is a tendency to respect herself so as to attempt in each part what she had produced in the Whole, but with a limited power and under certain conditions. N.B.—In this, the only scientific view, Nature itself is assumed as the Universal Principle of Life, and like all other *Powers*, is contemplated under the two primary Ideas of Identity and Multeity, i.e. alternately as one and as many. In other words, exclusively of *degree*, and as subsisting in a series of different intensities." [1]

In this passage Coleridge stops short of naming this principle Will, but in the parallel not less notable passage in MS. B III, he makes it clear that this is what he intends. Corresponding to the criticism of "Epicurus" in the above, we there have a protest against the view that the mind has to

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 108. I have left the capitals as indicating the importance he attaches to the thoughts. The passage has not, so far as I know, been printed before. This and the anticipation it contains of the modern interest of philosophers in the Concept of Nature are perhaps sufficient apology for the lengthy quotation.

be "weaned by aid of the analytic powers" from the natural conception of the whole as preceding the parts, and the reduction of Nature to nothing but "a mere declaration of an alien strength, and that gone ere I can arrest or question it". "This ignores the individuality of that which is acted upon. Aconite is poison to sheep, nutritious to goats. Even the atoms require to differ in shape." This difference lies beyond the reach of the reasoning faculty, for it cannot be reduced to cause or relation. It is presupposed in the possibility of cause. We have as our alternatives Chance (i.e. recourse to not thinking at all) or Will "which, if the total sum and result of individualities or simple productive acts be in the highest degree rational, i.e. tending in due proportion to a common unity, must be one with reason, though in the order of necessary connection its co-eternal antecedent". If this is so, the several individualities must be of the nature of a will, and therefore higher than Nature. The spontaneity we find in Nature is not indeed interpretable as will, but it is "of the nature of will", and may be conceived of as the offspring of it, as the automatism of habit in a musician's fingers: "spontaneity in a plant must be referred to some universal will, as the other to a particular will". From this he again passes to the view of what he calls the "shapes" of Nature, in contrast to the "forms" or "shaping principles", as a progressive series or scale.

Premising that the shapes may be of three kinds—(1) those formed by languescence in the shaping

power, e.g. an arrow or a rocket; (2) those imposed from without, e.g. the fluid in a containing vessel; (3) those which are owed to an inner energy, opposed to (2) as pure energy to pure receptivity—we have these variously blended in an infinite number of proportions, but the higher in the scale the greater the proportion of the last kind. Thus in the higher animals sensibility passes into muscular power and irritability, in order to return again upon itself and become a new sensibility; so that in all instances the influence of the external is mediated by and dependent upon the degree and state of development, and we have a scale in which "the maximum of each lower kind becomes the base and receptive substrate, as it were, of a higher kind, commencing through the irradiation and transfiguration by the higher power, the base of which it has become." "In man this law of proportions becomes fully manifest, and, in the strivings of the will (to rise), the excess of impressibility and receptivity of impressions from without (rises) not only above spontaneity, not only above impulse determined by the anticipation of outward objects, but even above that direction of the power more properly called voluntary, which itself predetermines the object of its own knowledge, and the previous reflection of that object in relation to itself, but still supposes a prior state of receptivity in overbalance during the impressions made on the senses. Man must have an object in himself, an object which he himself has constituted, which is at one and the same moment the subject and

the legislator, the law and the act of obedience." In man therefore so conceived all is energy, and the second of the above kinds of shape (in fact shape itself) ceases, ascending into form when the soul receives reason and "reason is her being".

3. The Idea of Life

It is this view of Nature as a progressive system of embodied and individualizing activities that in the essay is applied to the idea of Life. After stating and rejecting some current definitions of life, such as that it is "the sum of all the functions by which death is resisted", and that it consists in "assimilation, growth, and reproduction", Coleridge defines it himself as simply "the principle of individuation". Wherever you have this, you have something that goes beyond mere mechanism. He does not deny the existence of mechanism, but distinguishes it from what he calls life, as organization from without; as he epigrammatically puts it, "whatever is organized from without is a product of mechanism; whatever is mechanized from within is a production of organization".[1] So defined, he finds life to be a property of matter throughout the entire gamut

[1] See p. 385 n. of *Miscellanies Aesthetic and Literary*, where the Essay will most conveniently be found. With its general teaching should be compared that of J. H. Green in his Hunterian Lecture of 1840 on *Vital Dynamics* (see passages quoted in *Spiritual Philosophy*, vol. i. pp. xxv. foll.). Green's remark that life was to be contemplated "not as a thing, nor as a spirit, neither as a subtle fluid, nor as an intelligent soul but as a law" is of particular interest in view of present-day controversies. Coleridge was not a vitalist in the sense, e.g. of Driesch.

of its forms, beginning with elements or metals,[1] and going on through ever higher forms of crystals, the great vegetable and animal deposits, vegetables and animals as we know them, up to man, in whom "the whole force of organic power has attained an inward and centripetal direction". Thus, "in the lowest forms of the vegetable and animal world we perceive totality dawning into individuation, while in man, as the highest of the class, the individuality is not only perfected in its corporeal sense, but begins a new series beyond the appropriate limits of physiology. The tendency to individuation, more or less obvious, constitutes the common character of all classes, as far as they maintain for themselves a distinction from the universal life of the planet; while the degrees, both of intensity and extension, to which this tendency is realized, form the species and their ranks in the great scale of ascent and expansion".[2]

We are apt to think of individuation as a process of separation and detachment, but Coleridge insists throughout on the opposite tendency to interconnection as an inseparable element in it, just

[1] The nugget of gold is not life, seeing that its form is accidental and *ab extra*; but gold itself is life, seeing that it is an organized system of qualities ultimately activities; for "life is an act". He seemed even prepared to convert this dictum into "all act is life": "Nature", he notes in MS. C, p. 117, "(is) always vegetative" and "therefore the vegetable creation could be anterior to the sun." The resemblance and the difference between this and the theory of monads "that yet seem With various province and apt agency Each to pursue its own self-centring end", sympathetically sketched in the early poem, *The Destiny of Nations*, are worth noting.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 390.

as centripetal power is necessarily presupposed in centrifugal. It is this productive power that makes life incapable of mathematical treatment. But this does not exclude it from science, as Kant would have it, for whose aphorism that science ends with mathematics Coleridge would substitute as the truer one: "the full applicability of abstract science ceases the moment reality begins".

In the vital series thus depicted as a "grand scale of ascent and expansion", each higher stage is conceived of as not merely superimposed on the lower, e.g. life on mechanism, nor as merely employing it, but as assimilating it to itself by a process which "presupposes the homogeneous nature of the thing assimilated". On any other supposition we should have a miracle comparable to that of transubstantiation—"first annihilation, then creation out of nothing".

Inquiring further through what forces this individuating principle acts, Coleridge points to magnetism, electricity, chemistry or constructive affinity as the highest that science has as yet succeeded in discovering; but he holds it conceivable that these may be found to be reducible to some other which will be more akin to life.[1] Meantime, he notes, all of them illustrate what he regards as the most general law governing the action of life in every one of its forms—the law of polarity or "the essential dualism of nature", for it is always in the identity of two counter powers that "life subsists; in their strife it consists; in their recon-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 400.

ciliation it at once dies, and is born again into new forms, either falling back into the life of the whole, or starting anew in the process of individuation".[1]

The author goes on to pursue this hypothesis into minute details, most of which would probably have been rejected even by the science of his own time. But his treatment of time, space, and motion, as "the simplest and universal, but necessary symbols of all philosophic construction, the primary factors and elementary forms of every calculus, and of every diagram in the algebra and geometry of scientific philosophy", is of particular interest in view of recent developments of philosophy in the direction of defining the fundamental concepts of physical science. Needless to say, the emphasis in Coleridge is not upon these forms as containing the substance of the real world in any sense that can be taken as the ground of their explanation, but upon the active principle or *nisus* towards individuality which expresses itself through them.

4. Coleridge and Evolution

The idea of an actual evolution of species ("forms", as Coleridge called them) in time by the laws of natural selection, as conceived by Charles Darwin, was still in the future; but theories of their natural origin and development in the struggle for existence had been familiar to philosophers from the time of Lucretius. In Coleridge's own day Erasmus

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 390.

Darwin (1731–1802), in holding that "one and the same kind of living filaments is and has been the course of all organic life", had (in the words of his more famous grandson) "anticipated . . the views of Lamarck". Coleridge's omnivorous reading had familiarized him also with Giordano Bruno's doctrine that the Earth was "a complete ether-born animate being", which, by its union with the Sun, "successively conceives and brings to the birth from all parts of its body; so that, if the whole Earth were by some planetary accident or revolution depopulated (of its inhabitants), the Soul of the Earth would replace them: *Parens perfecta Animantum Absque ministerio coitus*".

He even goes out of his way to defend "the Philosopher of Nola" against the charge of Atheism brought against him on this ground, seeing that he everywhere considers the Earth and similar planetary souls throughout the Universe, though the "immediate maternal fount" of life, "as merely ministerial powers, and Nature, their collective name, as the Delegate, Servant, and Creature of one Supreme Being, and all-originating *Opifex*".

In view of all this, and of his own theory of the difference between what is merely prior in time and what is prior in reality and worth, and therefore in power, combined with his view of Nature as continually striving towards unity and continuity in spite of apparent "chasms", we might have expected Coleridge to have a sympathetic ear for speculations of this kind. It is all the more interesting to find him, in a carefully elaborated

autograph fragment,[1] energetically repudiating them in the Lucretian and Brunian, as well as in the Darwinian form, though, as we might expect, with a pronounced preference for the former more poetic version:

"And here once for all, I beg leave to remark that I attach neither belief nor respect to the Theory, which supposes the human Race to have been gradually perfecting itself from the darkest Savagery, or still more boldly tracing us back to the bestial as to our Larva, contemplates Man as the last metamorphosis, the gay *Image*, of some lucky species of Ape or Baboon. Of the two hypotheses I should, indeed, greatly prefer the Lucretian of the Parturiency of our Mother Earth, some score thousands years ago, when the venerable Elder was yet in her Teens, and her human Litter sucked the milk then oozing from countless Breasts of warm and genial Mud. For between an hypothetical *ἀπαξγινόμενον* or single Incident or Event in a state and during an epoch if the Planet presumed in all respects different from its present condition, and the laws of Nature appropriate to the same . . anterior of necessity to all actual experience, and an assertion of a universal process of Nature now existing (since there is the same reason for asserting the progression of every other race of animal from some lower species as of the human race) in contradiction to all experience, I can have no hesitation

[1] British Museum MS. Egerton 2801. See Miss Snyder's article, "Coleridge on Giordano Bruno", *Modern Language Notes*, vol. xlii. No. 7, where the passage is quoted in full along with other references to Bruno.

in preferring the former, that, for which Nothing can be said, to that *against* which Everything may be said. The History I find in my Bible is in perfect coincidence with the opinions which I should form on Grounds of Experience and Common Sense. But our belief that Man first appeared with all his faculties perfect and in full growth, the anticipation exercised by virtue of the supernatural act of Creation, in nowise contravenes or weakens the assertion that these faculties . . in each succeeding Individual, born according to nature, must be preceded by a process of growth, and consequently a state of involution or latency, correspondent to each successive Moment of Development. A rule abstracted from uniform Results, or the Facet of a Sum put by the Master's indulgence at the head of the sum to be worked, may not only render the Boy's Task shorter and easier, but without such assistance he might never have mastered it or attained the experience, from which the Rule might (have been derived?)."

It is easy to seize on the reference here to Biblical authority as witness to the inveterate power of tradition over Coleridge's mind. But the real emphasis in the above passage is in the absence of proof of natural evolution on "grounds of experience and common sense". In what was clearly intended as a note to it in the same manuscript he remarks: "When experience is possible, and in points that are the fit subjects of experience, the absence of experimental proof is tantamount to an experimental proof of the contrary. *Ex. gr.*

If a man should seriously assure me that he had in the course of his Travels seen a Tree, that produced live Barnacles as its fruit, I could not in strict logic declare it contrary to all experience; for he would be entitled to reply, 'No! for I believe it on my own.' But if a Theorist should assert such a fact only because in his opinion it would be a rational account of the present parentage and existence of Barnacles, in that case I should have a right to characterize his conjecture as against all experience."

What Coleridge would have said with the "experimental" evidence of the *Origin of Species* before him it is impossible to say. Hutchison Stirling, the leader of the Idealistic revival in the 'sixties, still treated Darwinism with philosophical contempt. The fact, on the other hand, that Coleridge quotes more than once, and adopts as the motto of the *Statesman's Manual*, a fine saying of Bruno's, altogether relevant to such a situation,[1] and that he found it possible to reconcile Bruno's speculations as to the birth of man, which were not less heretical than Darwin's, with the divine origin of the whole choir of Heaven and the furniture of Earth:

Auctori laudes decantans atque ministrans,[2]

and to attribute to him "a Principle, Spirit, and eloquence of Piety and Pure Morality not surpassed

[1] *Ad istaec quaeso vos, qualiacunque primo videantur aspectu, attendite, ut qui vobis forsan insanire videar, saltem quibus insaniam rationibus cognoscatis.*
[2] From Bruno's *De Immenso et Innumerabilibus.*

by Fénelon"—suggests that he would have had the insight to see the distinction between a biological account of the process in time, and the inner Law or Idea of the Universe as a spiritual Whole, of which the process is only the outward manifestation, and which is the proper subject of a philosophy of Nature. We can see, at any rate, from the above quotations that he was prepared to treat such a hypothesis without the unreasoning prejudice that disfigures the references to it in Carlyle and many others, who ought to have known better, in the next generation. Securely fixed in the conviction, deepened in him by his poetic experience, of the close affinity of Nature with mind, and "with that more than man, which is one and the same in all men", and of her power of seeming "to think and hold commune with us, like an individual soul",[1] he could afford to leave to biological science the question of the way in which she produced the shapes, among them the shape of man himself, which made this intercourse possible.

It is easy to criticize the theory of Nature here set forth as an undue extension of the concept of life and a hypostatizing of Nature.[2] What is philosophically valuable in it, connecting it in a suggestive way with recent physical speculations, is, in the first place, the emphasis on the presence in all phenomena of a principle that goes beyond anything that can properly be called mechanical;

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, October 1821, p. 258.
[2] See Dr. Watson's Preface to the Essay, *op. cit.*, pp. 356–7.

secondly, the conception of this principle as operating throughout the whole extent of Nature, manifesting itself in ever higher forms, which constitute real differences of kind, and not merely of degree: Nature, as he puts it, "ascending not as links in a suspended chain, but as the steps in a ladder", assimilating while transcending what has gone before; thirdly, the interpretation of the law of the universe, in harmony with this idea, as "a tendency to the ultimate production of the highest and most comprehensive unity"; lastly, the clearness with which he insists that the unity must consist of individuals, becoming more and more truly such in proportion as they unite themselves with the whole, and reflect the perfections to which as an embodiment of Will it summons them.

CHAPTER V

MORAL PHILOSOPHY

"The happiness of mankind is the end of virtue, and truth is the knowledge of the means; which he will never seriously attempt to discover who has not habitually interested himself in the welfare of others."—BRISTOL ADDRESS.

1. THE SCIENCE VERSUS SCHEMES OF MORALS

IT followed from Coleridge's general theory of rational knowledge as the apprehension of Ideas, in the sense of organizing, individualizing principles, that no true theory of morals could be evolved from mere generalizations from sense experience. Sense experience might show us the conditions under which the good life has to be lived, and from which rules of prudence, varying necessarily according to circumstances, might be derived. But any claim to universality and necessity, in other words any claim to possess a system of truth that could rightly be called a moral science, must be founded on deductions from the idea of the Will itself. This is the view he expounds in the careful statement of Aphorism CIXc. 26, in the *Aids to Reflection*: "By a Science I here mean any chain of Truths that are either absolutely certain, or necessarily true for the human mind from the laws and constitution of the mind itself. In neither case is our conviction derived, or capable of receiving any addition, from outward experience, or *empirical* data—i.e. matters of fact

given to us through the medium of the senses—though these data may have been the occasion, or may even be an indispensable condition, of our reflecting on the former and thereby becoming *conscious* of the same. On the other hand, a connected series of conclusions grounded on empirical data, in contradistinction from science, I beg leave (no better term occurring), in this place and for this purpose, to denominate a Scheme."

As illustrations of such schemes he goes on in Aphorism CXI,[1] to give all those which, as founded on calculations of self-interest, or on the average Consequences of Action, supposing them *general*, form a branch of Political Economy: "to which let all honour be given. Their utility is not here questioned. But, however estimable within their own sphere such schemes, or any one of them in particular, may be, they do not belong to Moral Science, to which both in kind and purpose they are in all cases *foreign* and, when substituted for it, *hostile*. Ethics, or the *Science* of Morality, does indeed in nowise exclude the consideration of *Action*; but it contemplates the same in its originating spiritual *Source* without reference to Space or Time or Sensible Existence. Whatever springs out of 'the perfect *Law* of Freedom', which exists only by its unity with the Will of God . . . that (according to the principles of Moral Science) is *Good*."

After so careful a definition of a subject so

[1] Under the title, "Paley not a Moralist". Cp. *Table Talk*, 1884 ed., p. 155.

closely related to Coleridge's central interest in the renovation of religion, we might have expected a large portion of a work expressly written "to establish the distinct characters of prudence, morality and religion" to have been devoted to the development of this "science".

Yet neither here nor in any of his other published works do we have any attempt of the kind. With these mainly before him in 1856, the author of the able essay on Coleridge in *Cambridge Essays* of that date [1] noted as "the most striking fact about Coleridge's moral philosophy, considering the universal supremacy which moral considerations held in his mind", that "there is so little to say about it". This he goes on to find all the more remarkable as there existed, in the work of his great fellow-countryman Butler, a body of doctrine, which only required to be reinterpreted and freed from ambiguous elements to form the basis of just such a science as Coleridge had in mind. The explanation doubtless is partly to be found in the singular fact, which this writer also notices, of Coleridge's apparent entire ignorance of Butler,[2] but also partly in the popular character of his own chief published works. It is therefore natural to expect that in the more systematic unpublished works on which he was later engaged, there should be some attempt to supply what was wanting.

[1] F. J. A. Hort, M.A. See p. 336.

[2] This is confirmed by the occurrence of the name of Butler in *Aids to Reflection*, XLIIIc, 10 and 13, but in a context which shows that he has Samuel and not Joseph in his mind. His hatred of the bad Butler, who wrote *Hudibras*, seems to have blinded him to the good Butler, who wrote the *Analogy* and the *Sermons*.

Nor are we wholly disappointed. If these do not supply us with anything approaching a complete theory of Ethics, yet they give us invaluable hints as to what must always constitute the method and the elements of such a theory. In reading them we have always to bear in mind the jungle of unanalysed notions and ambiguous terms, through which at that time anyone who sought to do justice to the moral consciousness had to hack his way. Coleridge might seem to some to be oddly equipped for such a task and to suggest rather a Don Quixote than a St. George. As a matter of fact, he possessed just that fine sense of psychological and linguistic distinctions that was most required for this work, and, comparatively meagre as his results may now appear, it is not too much to say that they all point in the right direction.

2. The Method of Ethics

Seeing that the science of morals takes the form of a deduction from the Idea of the Will, it would seem that its foundations must be laid in the demonstration of the reality that corresponds to the idea. It was precisely this reality that was denied by "the scheme of pure mechanism, which, under all disguises, tempting or repulsive, Christian or infidel, forms the groundwork of these systems of modern and political philosophy, political economy and education, which began by manufacturing mind out of sense and sense out of

sensation (and) which reduce all form to shape and all shape to impression from without".[1]

Yet here, as in the case of Ideas in general, we are faced with the difficulty of any direct proof by way of conceptual logic. Coleridge admits that no such proof is possible, but holds that "indirect arguments from extreme improbability, and motives of strongest inducement to the reconsideration of the point denied may be brought forward".[2] What makes it worth while bringing them forward is that the denier, as often as not, is unaware of all that is involved in his position: he "goes but half way, pursuing the line of declination far enough to lose sight of the true road, and yet not so far as to be aware of the whirlpool in the outward eddy of which he is wheeling round and round".[3] On the other hand, the generality of mankind are so carried along, among other things by the inertia of the moral system into which they are born, "custom, habit, imitation, the necessity of preserving character, the sympathy and supports derived from superior rank and fortune, and the consequent absence of temptation", that "they may pass through life without a single principle, and never feel the want of it from the multitude and variety of its substitutes and its counterfeits".

Negatively, then, the method will consist in forcing the mechanistic view "by a stern logic,

[1] MS. B III. See Snyder, *op. cit.*, pp. 330. On the distinction between form and shape, see Chap. IV, p. 125 above.

[2] MS. B II. Snyder, p. 129. I have here combined the gist of these two passages.

[3] MS. B III, *loc. cit., supra.*

into all its consequences"; *positively* it will consist in starting from the general assent to the *postulate* of Will, in order to "mature this into distinct conceptions and by means of these to bring a consistency of thought and language in(to) all other important conceptions included in the same class truly or falsely, and in the latter instance for the purpose of transferring them to their proper department or birth-place".

It would be difficult to find a better statement of the true method of ethics or one more in harmony both with the logic which teaches that the ultimate ground of the validity of any idea is, in Bosanquet's phrase, "this or nothing", and with the definition of philosophy in general as "a criticism of categories". Anyway, it is such a form of demonstration, which, as the writer tells us, is the aim of the chapters he devotes in this work to the analysis of some of the leading moral conceptions.

3. The Idea of the Self

Disregarding the particular order of his exposition, we may start from the most comprehensive of these in the idea of the Self. In the ethical philosophy of the time, the idea of Self-love was a central one. But both the parts of this hyphenated compound were ambiguous. Leaving the latter part for the present, what, Coleridge asks, do we mean by "self"?

The prevalent empiricism, as it resolved mind

into a series of sensations, resolved the active self into a series of sensory impulses, and particularly of impulses directed to pleasure as an object. To Coleridge this meant losing hold of the unity which is of the very essence of a self. If the self is to be a real unity and not "the semblance produced by an aggregate on the mind of the beholder", we must conceive of it as "anterior to all our sensations and to all the objects towards which they are directed", seeing that without it "nothing can become the object of reflection—not even the things of perception". As that which brings unity into the variety, as the universal that expresses itself in the particulars of experience, the self is manifested to consciousness as an Idea. But ideas are known through representatives (meanings, as we might say, through images), which need not be always the same. In the case of the idea of the self it is not fixed by nature, but, on the contrary, "varies with the growth, bodily, moral and intellectual, in each individual".

So far is the *body*, for instance, from being the only representative, that it is not even the first: in the early periods of infancy the mother or the nurse is the self of the child. And "who has not experienced in dreams the attachment of our personal identity to forms the most remote from our own"? [1] Nor is the body—*given* though it is to sense, and habitually thought of as the self—prescribed by necessity as the only object of love. "Even in his life of imperfection there is a state

[1] Yes! but why only in *dreams*?

possible in which a man might truly say, 'myself loves a or b', freely constituting the object in whatever it wills to love, commanding what it wills and willing what it commands." We only in fact know what we mean by a soul or self, as the subject of weal or woe, when we cease to look for it in a single soul as one of a class, and "have learned the possibility of finding a Self in another (yea, even in an enemy)".

Taking the word in this sense, everything may be said to be *self*-love. But we apply the term rightly only when we mean "a less degree of distance and a comparatively narrowness of our moral view": its grossness being diminished "no less by distance in time than by distance in space".

Short though the treatment here is, Coleridge shows in it that he has clearly grasped the Kantian notion of all human action as a form of self-realization; further, that he is feeling his way to the all-important distinction between self-affirmation and selfishness, and to a view of moral value as dependent on the extent to which a man organizes the passing moments of his temporal self into a whole, representative of what is most permanent in him. "The good man", he wrote elsewhere, "organizes the hours and gives them a soul, and to that, the very essence of which is to fleet and *to have been*, he communicates an imperishable and a spiritual nature. Of the good and faithful servant whose energies are thus methodized, it is less truly affirmed that he lives in time than that time lives in him. His days, months, and years,

as the stops and punctual marks in the records of duties performed, will survive the wreck of worlds and remain extant when Time itself shall be no more." [1]

4. Will and Motive

Leaving for the moment the question of the good self, we have here reached a point of view from which the meaning of will and motive and their relation to each other can be more clearly defined. The common idea of will is that of a power of responding, whether freely or in a way antecedently determined, to motives conceived of as acting upon it from the outside. Coleridge saw the error of this idea, whether held by libertarian or necessitarian. "For what", he asks, "is a motive? Not a thing, but the thought of a thing. But as all thoughts are not motives, in order to specify the class of thoughts, we must add the predicate 'determining', and a motive must be defined as a determining thought. But again, what is a Thought? Is this a thing or an individual? What are its circumscriptions, what the interspaces between it and another? Where does it begin? Where does it end? Far more readily could we apply these questions to an ocean billow, or the drops of water which we may imagine as the component integers of the ocean. As by a billow we mean no more than a particular movement of the sea, so neither by a thought can we mean more than the mind thinking in some one direction. Conse-

[1] *Preliminary Treatise on Method*, 3rd ed., p. 24.

quently a motive is neither more nor less than the act of an intelligent being determining itself, and the very watchword of the necessitarian is found to be at once an assertion and a definition of free agency, i.e. the power of an intelligent being to determine its own agency".[1]

After this account of the essential continuity of the practical intelligence, Coleridge goes on to explain similarly that what we mean by will is not the source of isolated actions but "an abiding faculty or habit or fixed predisposition to certain objects". So far therefore from the will originating in the motive and the motive governing the man, "it is the man that makes the motives: and these indeed are so various, unstable, and chameleon-like that it is often as difficult as fortunately it is a matter of comparative indifference, to determine what a man's motive is for this or that particular action. A wise man will rather inquire what the man's general objects are—what does he habitually wish. Iago's apparent vacillation in assigning now one, now another motive of his action, is the natural result of his own restless nature, distempered by a keen sense of his own intellectual superiority and a vicious habit of assigning the precedence to the intellectual instead of the moral. Yet how many of our modern critics have attributed to the profound author this the appropriate inconsistency of the character itself."[2]

[1] MS. B II. Snyder, p. 132.

[2] *Ibid.* See Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 152–3, and cp. *Omniana* Ed. T. Ashe, 1834, p. 361, on "Motives and Impulses", where this

While realizing that motives are the ideas of objects that attract us by reason of their harmony with the internal predisposition or permanent will of a man, Coleridge would do justice to the force of external circumstances. He had asked in *Aids to Reflection* [1]: "Will any reflecting man admit that his own Will is the only and sufficient determinant of all he *is* and all he does? Is nothing to be attributed to the harmony of the system to which he belongs and to the pre-established Fitness of the Objects and Agents, known and unknown, that surround him, as acting *on* his will, though, doubtless, *with* it likewise?" In the passage before us he illustrates the same point from the contrast between a change of character gradually wrought from within and the sudden change wrought by some violent influence from without: "A violent motive may revolutionize a man's opinions and professions—a flash of lightning turn at once the polarity of the compass needle—though more frequently his honesty dies away imperceptibly from evening into twilight and from twilight into utter darkness."

From the point of view of modern psychology the analysis here given is again meagre enough, but Coleridge has seized the essential point of the true relation between will and motive, and on the basis of it is prepared to discuss the nature of the Good and, incidentally, to define his position

passage occurs in slightly different form—the impulses deducible from men's habitual objects of pursuit being definitely called "the true efficient causes of their conduct".

[1] Aphorism XLIIIc, 2.

in relation both to current hedonistic theories and the deeper ethics of Kant.

5. The Meaning of The Good

What he says on the former has particular interest in view of the discussion of the value of pleasure in the good life, that was to occupy so large a place in later nineteenth-century ethics. Coleridge was himself prepared to define the whole scope of moral philosophy in terms of this controversy: "The sum total of moral philosophy", he held,[1] "is found in this one question: Is *Good* a superfluous word, or mere lazy synonym for the pleasurable and its causes—at most a mere modification to express degree and comparative duration of pleasure?" But he also held that a general case against the identification of good with pleasure could be established by an appeal to universal usage, on the principle that a distinction, which is common to all languages of the civilized world, "must be the exponent, because it must be the consequent, of a common consciousness of man as man". The very phrase "pleasure is a good" implies the recognition of other goods. Otherwise it would be a mere pleonasm = "pleasure is pleasure". If the universality of the *desire* for pleasure is urged in favour of the theory, he is prepared to show that this involves the confusion between "things which are good because they are desired, and things which are or ought to be

[1] See *Table Talk* (*ed. cit.*), p. 155.

desired because they are good", as in the simple case of different kinds of food. Here also language refutes the theory: "the mere difference between the particles 'to' and 'for' is sufficient to destroy the sophism".[1] The distinctions here drawn between good and pleasure-value, and again between the desirable and the actually desired are of fundamental importance for ethical theory, and remind one of the confusions, that even so clear a thinker as John Stuart Mill would have avoided, had he been able to learn them from Coleridge.

Not less helpful to Mill and others would have been Coleridge's carefully drawn out distinction between the different kinds of pleasure or satisfaction, depending on the nature of the activity of which it is the accompaniment. Starting with the ambiguity of "Happiness", he distinguishes between the state that depends on favourable outward circumstances, into which chance or "hap" enters, and the state that depends more on our own inward and spiritual endeavours. In the latter again he distinguishes that which is more purely spiritual, and to which he would assign the name "blessedness", from that which results "when the intellectual energies are exerted in conformity with the laws of the intellect and its inherent forms", for which he proposes the name "eunoia". From both of these he finally distinguishes *hedone* or pleasure, as comprising "all the modes of being

[1] He quotes the contemporary analyst "who has confounded the taste of mutton with the taste for mutton, and gravely sought for the origin of the latter in the same place with that of the former viz. the papillae of the tongue and palate".

which arise from the correspondence of the external stimuli in kind and degree to the sensible life". Taking pleasure in this sense, we may say that the only ground of preference is the *amount*. But he acutely observes that even in extending the idea of pleasure from present amount to comparative duration and causative influence (two of Bentham's "dimensions"), we already suppose the intervention and union of motives, which are not derived from the relation between the animal life and the stimulants, but from the idea of the will or self as above defined.

Coming to the relation of these different kinds of satisfaction to "good", he sets down as alone unconditionally good that which results from the whole moral nature. But he claims a place also for *eunoia*, when the intellect is employed in the service of such spiritual good, as itself good—when not employed in its disservice, as innocent; and similarly for pleasure, under the same conditions. It was in their confusion between eunoia and hedone and in their inclusion of both in the same condemnation that he found the main error of Kant and Fichte. Eunoia is not, indeed, spiritual in the highest sense, but may yet be an instrument of the spirit, being to it "as body is to soul".

But Coleridge's criticism, both of the current empiricism and of Kantian rationalism strikes deeper than the rejection of their treatment of pleasure. Beyond this there was the acceptance by the former of the "consequences" as the ultimate criterion of the goodness of an action, the total

rejection of them by the latter, and going along with this a similar antagonism in the acceptance and rejection of the sympathetic affections as a factor in the good life.

6. Motive and Consequences

(*a*) To the first of these questions Coleridge gives his answer in the carefully elaborated criticism of Paley's doctrine that "the general consequences are the chief and best criterion of the right and wrong of particular actions", to be found in Section I, Essay XV, of *The Friend*.[1] The doctrine aims in the first place at giving us a criterion, which does not, like others, depend on the notions of the individual. But this criterion, so far from giving us this, is itself dependent on what is most individual in man, the power derived from the accidental circumstances of natural talent and education instead of from "that part of our nature which in all men may and ought to be the same: in the conscience and common sense". In the second place it aims at giving us a criterion of morality. As a matter of fact, it confounds morality with law, and "draws away the attention from the will and from the inward motives and impulses, which constitute the essence of morality, to the outward act". To suggest further, as Paley does,

[1] Edition of 1818; but it was also contained in the 1812 edition, p. 374 foll. That he marks it with a note for quotation in MS. B, where he is dealing with the same subject, shows the importance he attached to it as a statement of his own view.

that Divine Justice will be regulated in its final judgment by this rule, is to remove the grounds of the appeal to "a juster and more appropriate sentence hereafter", which is "one of the most persuasive, if not one of the strongest arguments for a future state".

It is this appeal to the inward motive that the Apostle means by faith when he appeals to it as the sole principle of justification. Nothing could be more groundless than the alarm that this doctrine may be prejudicial to utility and active well-doing. "To suppose that a man should cease to be beneficent by becoming benevolent seems to me scarcely less absurd than to fear that a fire may prevent heat or that a perennial fountain may prove the occasion of drought." True, man (and God relatively to man) must judge by works, seeing that "man knows not the heart of man; scarcely does anyone know his own". But since good works may exist without saving principles, "they cannot contain in themselves the principle of salvation". On the other hand, saving principles never did and never can exist without good works: "For what is love without kind offices (including thoughts and words) whenever these are possible?" and "what noble mind would not be offended if he were supposed to value the serviceable offices equally with the love that produced them, or if he were supposed to value the love for the sake of the services, and not the services for the sake of the love?" The doctrine of faith and the doctrine of works are "one truth considered in its two

principal bearings". What man sees and can alone judge by is the outward fruits, but "what God sees and what alone justifies is the inward spring."

If we pursue the doctrine of general consequences further, we can see that to anyone who believes (as Paley does) in an overruling Providence, the criterion must be a merely imaginary one, seeing that he must hold that all actions, the crimes of Nero not less than the virtues of the Antonines, work for good. Finally it can be shown to be "either nugatory or false", seeing that the appeal is to the "general consequences" that will result on condition that all men do as we do. Passing over the source of self-delusion and sophistry that is here opened up and supposing the mind in its sanest state, "how can it possibly form a notion of the nature of an action considered as indefinitely multiplied unless it has previously a distinct notion of the single action itself, which is the multiplicand? . . . But if there be any means of ascertaining the action in and for itself, what further do we want? Would we give light to the sun? or look at our own fingers through a telescope? The nature of every action is determined by all its circumstances; alter the circumstances and a similar set of motions may be repeated, but they are no longer the same or a similar act."

To all this it is vain to reply that "the doctrine of the general consequences was stated as the criterion of the action, not of the agent". For, apart from the oversight of attributing it in that sense to the Supreme Judge, the distinction itself

"is merely logical, not real and vital". The character of the agent is determined by his view of the action; and "that system of morals is alone true and suited to human nature which unites the intention and the motive, the warmth and the light, in one and the same act of mind. This alone is worthy to be called a moral principle".

(*b*) It was on this ground that Coleridge was prepared to reject no less emphatically than he rejected Paley's doctrine of consequence as the sole criterion, what he calls the "Stoic hypocrisy",[1] that would separate goodness from all idea of the consequences. "I know", he wrote, "that in order to the idea of virtue we must suppose the pure good will, or reverence for the law as excellent in itself; but this very excellence supposes consequences though not selfish ones. . . . For if the Law be barren of all consequences, what is it but words? To obey the Law for its own sake is really a mere sophism in any other sense—you might as well put Abracadabra in its place." He is there speaking of consequences extending for the individual beyond this life, but that he would apply it also to consequences, individual and social, in this life, is clear both from the above-quoted passage from *The Friend*, and from a long and interesting entry in the philosophical diary *Semina Rerum* [2] on

[1] Marginal note on p. 344 of Kant's *Vermischte Schriften*.

[2] MS. C, p. 15, representing, I think, a later stage of his own reflections, and an attempt to assign its place to the "moral sense" that had played so great a part in the ethical theories of the preceding generation. See J. Bonar's *Moral Sense*, Library of Philosophy (1930).

the place of knowledge or, as he calls it, "Sense" in the good life, as necessarily implying a reference to "interests". After distinguishing knowing for the sake of knowing as Science, from knowing for the sake of being as Sense, and in the latter that which has "exclusive reference to the responsibility of *personal* being", as Moral Sense, from the Natural Sense which has regard to the peculiar interests of the individual, he goes on:

"The perfection of human nature arises when the first (i.e. science) is allowed to be an end, but yet in subordination to the second (i.e. moral sense) as the alone *ultimate* end, and when the second existing in combination with the third (i.e. natural sense) elevates and takes it up into its own class by the habit of contemplating both the common and the peculiar interests of *all* individuals, as far as they lie within his sphere of influence, as his own individual interests. Here we have the man of practical Rectitude, with right principle, prescribing the rule, Discretion determining the objects, and Judgment guiding the application. He seeks his own happiness, and he seeks the happiness of his neighbours, and he seeks both in such a way and by such means as enables him to find each in the other." [1]

There is a certain confusion here between the moral sense and the interests that are sensed. Only the latter can, strictly speaking, be an "end". But

[1] The passage reminds us of Aristotle's treatment of the Intellectual Virtues in *Ethics*, vi, with which we may also compare what he says of the different kinds of Prudence in *Aids to Reflection*, Aphorism XXIX.

the meaning is plain, namely, the impossibility of separating the two in actual fact. That in the fullest exercise of spirit both are merged in a higher comes out in his fine treatment of Love, which brings us to the second of the above-mentioned contrasts between his own view and that both of Kant and of current empiricism, and therewith to the point at which his moral philosophy merges in his philosophy of religion.

7. Love the Fulfilling of the Law

It seems doubtful whether Coleridge was familiar with Adam Smith's *Moral Sentiments* and the place in the moral life assigned by writers of his school to Sympathy. In one of his longer contributions to Southey's *Omniana* he contrasts the "Good Heart" with Pharisaic righteousness and would have "the wisdom of love preceding the love of wisdom", and goes on to pay a tribute to "those who act from good-hearted impulses, a kindly and cheerful mood and the play of minute sympathies, continuous in their discontinuity like the sand-thread of the hour-glass", and to the part they have in carrying on "the benignant scheme of social nature". But he was as far as Adam Smith from trusting to what he calls these "temperamental *pro*-virtues", as the sustaining principle of the good life. Something sterner was required, which he was prepared to find with Kant in the good will alone,[1]

[1] He quotes (MS. B) the famous passage from the *Metaphysic of Ethics*, Kant's Werke (Hartenstein), vol. iv. p. 241: "It is impossible

only differing from him "so far as he differs from the Christian code". He does not here tell us wherein the difference consists, but it is not difficult to gather it from other passages. His dissent from Kant's attempt to dissociate the good will from all regard to consequences has been already mentioned. But his criticism went deeper and challenged Kant's whole conception of the independence of will and affection.

So long ago as in a contribution to Southey's *Omniana* (1812) and without reference to Kant, he had written:[1] "Love, however sudden, as when we fall in love at first sight (which is perhaps always the case of love in its highest sense), is yet an act of the will, and that too one of its primary, and therefore ineffaceable acts. This is most important; for, if it be not true, either love itself is all a romantic *hum*, a mere connection of desire with a form appropriated to excite and qualify it, or the mere repetition of a day-dream; or if it be granted that love has a real, distinct, and excellent being, I know not how we could attach blame and immorality to inconstancy, when confined to the affections and sense of preference. Either, therefore, we must brutalize our notions with Pope,[2] or we must dissolve and thaw away all bonds of

to think of anything in the world, nay of anything even outside the world, which could without limitation be held to be good except a good Will"—probably for the first time in English ethical literature.

[1] *Ed. cit.*, p. 410.

[2] He quotes:

> "Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refined,
> Is gentle love and charms all woman-kind."

morality by the irresistible shocks of an irresistible sensibility with Sterne."

We are not therefore surprised to find this view directly applied [1] to Kant's statement that "love is a matter of feeling not of will". "If I say I doubt this independence of love on the will, and doubt love's being in its essence a mere matter of feeling, i.e. a somewhat formed in us which is not of us and from us . . . I mean only that my thoughts are not distinct, much less adequate, on the subject —and I am not able to convey any grounds of my belief of the contrary. But the contrary I do believe. What Kant affirms of man in the state of Adam, an ineffable act of Will choosing evil, and which is underneath or within consciousness, though incarnate in the conscience, inasmuch as *it must be conceived* as taking place in the *Homo Noumenon* not the *Homo Phaenomenon*—something like this I conceive of Love, in that higher sense of the word which Petrarch understood." What he held that sense to be may perhaps be gathered from what he says in the same connection about Love "as not only contradistinguished from lust, but as disparate even from the personal attachments of habit and complex associations", which pass for it "in the vast majority of instances and into which true Love enters at best only as an *element*".[2]

[1] In a marginal note on Kant's treatment of Menschenliebe, which may perhaps be judged to be later on the ground both of the greater hesitation and the greater maturity of the thought.

[2] *Table Talk*, p. 117. Cp. "Sympathy constitutes friendship; but in love there is a sort of antipathy or opposing passion. Each strives to be the other, and both together make up one whole."

Yet in the end it remains to him "one of the five or six *magna mysteria* of human nature.[1] . . . There are two mighty mysteries—action and passion (or passive action), and love is synthesis of these, in which each is the other—and it is only *a* synthesis, or one of the syntheses of action and passion; other discoveries must be made in order to know the principle of Individuation in general and then the principle of Personality."

For what he has further to say of the mystery, we have to go to his Philosophy of Religion, and to his belief that the ground of it has to be sought in the still greater mystery of the union of men with one another by reason of their union with God. This doubtless stamps his ethical theory as a form of mysticism, but not, he would have insisted, in any other sense than that "*omnia exeunt in mysteria*".

To Coleridge, moreover (and this was the sum and substance of his whole ethical and religious philosophy alike), it did not mean the loss of the individual in the Whole. In the passage just quoted the principle of Love is assumed to be in the end the principle of individuation. It was the growing conviction of his later years that individuality, in the only sense in which it was of moral and religious significance, consisted, not in the narrowing down of life to an exclusive point, but in the expansion of it towards the inclusion of the Whole —Man in God, doubtless, but also God in Man.

[1] Others he mentions are Will, Conscience, Carnate Evil, Identity, Growth, and Progression.

Expanded in the light of these passages and comments, we can find in the continuation of the Aphorism with which we started a summary of the answer which Coleridge was prepared to give to the one-sided ethical "schemes" of his time, whether empirical or rational, individualistic or pantheistic: "The object of Ethical Science", he there writes, "is no Compost, Collectorium, or Inventory of Single Duties; nor does it seek in the 'multitudinous Sea', in the predetermined waves, tides, and currents of *Nature*, that freedom which is an exclusive attribute of Spirit. For as the Will or Spirit, the Source and Substance of Moral Good, is one and all in every part; so must it be the totality, the whole articulated series of Single Acts, taken as Unity, that can alone, in the severity of Science, be recognized as the proper Counterpart and adequate Representative of a good Will. Is it in this or that limb, or not, rather, in the whole body, the entire Organismus, that the Law of Life reflects itself? Much less then, can the Law of the Spirit work in fragments."

Coleridge's thought, both in his published and in his unpublished writings, was too much dominated by the religious interest, and in that too much occupied with the problem of original sin, to leave him free to develop anything that could be called a balanced system of ethics. But there was no one living at the time who had a clearer idea of what was necessary as the foundation of such a system, or who went further by the acuteness of his criti-

cism of prevalent abstractions in preparing materials for it. That English philosophy had to wait nearly half a century after his time—in fact, till the publication of Bradley's *Ethical Studies* in 1876, for anything better or even as good, is an interesting comment of the loss it sustained in his failure to make these materials available to the next generation.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

"A people are free in proportion as they form their own opinions. In the strictest sense of the word, Knowledge is Power. Without previous illumination, a change in the forms of Government will be of no avail. These are but the shadows, the virtue and rationality of the People at large are the substance of Freedom."—PROSPECTUS OF *The Watchman*.

1. COLERIDGE'S INTEREST IN POLITICS[1]

COLERIDGE lived in stirring times and his was not the temperament to allow him to live in them without their living in him. His enthusiasm for the ideas of the French Revolution is reflected in the fragment that survives of the ode he wrote on the *Destruction of the Bastille*. He tells us in the *Biographia Literaria* of "the state of thorough disgust and despondency into which he sank" when his hopes were quenched by later events. What this meant to him has been recorded imperishably in his great *Ode to France* of the year 1798. But the state of things at home, the

[1] Since this section was written, Dr. Alfred Cobban's book on *Edmund Burke, A Study of the Political and Social Thinking of Burke, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey*, with its excellent chapter on the Political views of Coleridge, has appeared. Our chief difference is that, while he rejects Coleridge's emphasis on the "Idea" of the Constitution as pseudo-philosophy (p. 179), though crediting him with adopting a scientific empiricism in place of a metaphysical theory of politics (p. 177), in what here follows Coleridge's recognition of the Idea in the sense not of a "transcendental principle overruling and independent of experience", as Leslie Stephen expresses it (*op. cit.*, p. 364), but of the intuitively apprehended *meaning* of experience is treated as a philosophical merit.

war with France, the condition of the people after the war, the low state to which politics was in danger of sinking, the movements for reform and the troubles of Ireland, were far too clamant to permit him to rest. It was not merely as a means to a livelihood, but in the hope of affording the guidance of fixed principles in politics that he engaged for some score of years almost continuously in writing for the *Watchman*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Courier*. He tells us himself that what he thus wrote, had it been published in books, "would have filled a respectable number of volumes". As it is, his daughter has rescued some thousand pages in the three volumes of *Essays on His Own Times*.[1] It was on such a background of close observation of politics, if not of actual administrative experience, that he sketched at different periods of his life that part of his philosophy which had perhaps the greatest influence on his contemporaries and was made by John Stuart Mill the subject of his famous essay in the *Westminster Review*.[2]

[1] There seems no reason to doubt that some sort of proposal was made by Stuart that Coleridge should enter into partnership with him in the management of the *Morning Post* and the *Courier* on condition that he "would give up the country and the lazy reading of old folios". It is characteristic of the type of unmetaphysical writer, referred to in the preface above, that H. D. Traill, who had the highest opinion not only of Coleridge's talent for journalism, but of the real literary value of these essays, regrets his refusal of Stuart's proposals on the ground that "it would have been better not only for Coleridge himself but for the world at large if the editor's efforts had been successful". See his *Coleridge*, p. 86.

[2] Afterwards republished in his *Dissertations and Discussions*. The chief sources for what follows are *The Friend*, Section the First, *On the Principles of Political Knowledge*, Essays, i–iv; *Lay Sermons* (1816–17); *Church and State* (1829).

Mill has depicted in a masterly way the condition of politics in England when Coleridge wrote the essay on the *Constitution of the Church and State according to the Idea of Each*, in which he developed the hints already contained in *The Friend* and *Lay Sermons*. "We had a Government which we respected too much to attempt to change it, but not enough to trust it with any power or look to it for any services that were not compelled." On the one hand there were the Tory believers in authority, whose cry was "hands off the sacred ark of the Constitution," and the power and privilege it brought to a class. On the other hand were the Radical believers in Liberty and *laissez faire*, to whom government was at best a necessary evil: "Their cry was not 'Help us'; 'Guide us'; 'Do for us the things we cannot do; and instruct us that we may do well those which we can' (and truly such requirements from such rulers would have been a bitter jest): the cry was 'Let us alone'." There was a similar conflict in men's minds about the Church. On the one side were those who supported it in a spirit of blind conservatism or with more or less hypocrisy, as necessary for social order. On the other were those who would sweep it away as a centre of superstition and reaction "got up originally and all along maintained for the sole purpose of picking people's pockets without aiming or being found conducive to any honest purpose during the whole process". Into this welter of opinion Coleridge introduced an entirely new note by

calling on men to return to the Idea or ultimate aim of both State and Church and reorient themselves in the light of it on the problem of their present duties.

2. The Origin of Political Obligation

Before the date of the publication of *The Friend*, Coleridge had arrived at clear convictions, if not as to the Idea of the Civic Community, at least as to the origin and the ends of Government, the basis of civic rights, and the extent to which moral law applied to the relations of nations to one another. He puts the formation in men's minds of steadfast convictions concerning the most important questions of politics in the forefront in enumerating the objects he had in view in the publication and devotes the central part of it to a criticism of historical theories and an exposition of his own. In the distinction between sense, reason, and understanding, which by this time was the foundation of his whole philosophy, he found a convenient starting-point for classification. From what we already know of the estimation in which he held sense and understanding as organs of truth, we might have expected to find him rejecting theories based upon them in favour of one based upon deductions from the ideas of the reason. It is all the more interesting to find him, on the contrary, reserving his most trenchant and detailed criticism for the theory which in his own time had taken this for its basis. He was himself

aware of the apparent inconsistency,[1] but trusts to make it clear that what he objects to in it is not its appeal to reason, but the interpretation of reason in a sense which cuts it off from the steadying influences of experience and the expediencies to which prudence points. "Distinct notions", he explains in a note, "do not suppose different things. When we make a threefold distinction in human nature we are fully aware that it is a distinction, not a division, and that in every act of mind the man unites the properties of sense, understanding, and reason." From this it follows that any theory founded on exclusive regard to any one of them is necessarily false.

Taking the theory of Hobbes, which ascribes the origin and continuance of government to "fear or the power of the stronger aided by the force of custom" as an example of systems founded on the view that "the human mind consists of nothing but manifold modifications of passive sensation", he rejects it on grounds that subsequent idealistic criticism has made familiar but that are none the less interesting as stated by him, and as an introduction to his own theory. The theory is "in the literal sense of the word preposterous: for fear presupposes conquest and conquest a previous union and agreement between the conquerors." Leaders in the beginning must have been in some sense chosen. "Apparent exceptions in Asia and Africa are, if possible, still more subversive of this system, for they will be found to have originated

[1] *Loc. cit.* Section i, Essay iii, of later edition.

in religious imposture and the first chiefs to have secured a willing and enthusiastic obedience to themselves as delegates of the Deity." But the whole theory is baseless. "We are told by history, we learn from our experience, we know from our own hearts that fear, of itself, is utterly incapable of producing any regular, continuous, and calculable effect even on an individual; and that the fear which does act systematically upon the mind always presupposes a sense of duty as its cause." Not fear, but the spirit of law, "this is the true necessity which compels men into the social state now and always by a still-beginning, never-ceasing force of moral cohesion". Hobbes had declared that "the laws without the sword are but a bit of parchment. How far this is true every honest man's heart will tell him, if he will content himself with asking his own heart and not falsify the answer by his notions concerning the hearts of other men. But, were it true, still the fair answer would be—Well! but without the laws the sword is but a piece of iron."

Coleridge had used the word contract in the course of the criticism above condensed and the theory of the Social Contract was still sufficiently alive to make it necessary to guard against misunderstanding. As a theory, he regarded it as not only dangerous but absurd, "for what could give moral force to a contract? The same sense of duty which binds us to keep it must have pre-existed as impelling us to make it." In the sense in which he uses the word, it is "merely synonymous with

the sense of duty acting in a specific direction, i.e. determining our moral relations, as members of a body politic . . a means of simplifying to our apprehension the ever-continuing causes of social union, even as the conservation of the world may be represented as an act of continued creation". Even although such a contract had been entered into, it could do no more than bind the contracting parties to act for the general good in the way that existing circumstances, internal and external, required or permitted. No more than the ideal contract could it affect the question of means and end. Taken in this sense an original (rather an ever-originating) contract is a very natural and significant mode of expressing the reciprocal duties of subject and sovereign and is far from deserving the contempt which Hume, naturally enough from his point of view, lavishes upon it.

Turning to Rousseau as the representative of the error implied in the appeal to pure reason, Coleridge lays down the excellent principle, as valid to-day as in his time, that "it is bad policy to represent a political system as having no charm but for robbers and assassins, and no natural origin but in the brains of fools or madmen, when experience has proved that the great danger of the system consists in the peculiar fascination it is calculated to exert in noble and imaginative spirits". It was to this temptation that Burke had succumbed, and that explained the small number of converts he made during his lifetime. Needless

to say, Coleridge had the greatest admiration for Burke and was always ready to express his own debt to him. There was little, he held, that the political philosopher could not learn from him: "In Mr. Burke's writings the germs of almost all political truths may be found." [1] But he held also that his connection with actual politics had had the unfortunate effect of driving him into inconsistencies that a more philosophical attitude would have avoided, and in the few sentences that follow he gives us what is perhaps the best criticism extant of his great predecessor. "If his opponents are theorists, then everything is to be founded on prudence, on mere calculations of expediency; and every man is represented as acting according to the state of his own immediate self-interest. Are his opponents calculators? Then calculation itself is represented as a sort of crime . . The fact was that Burke, in his public character, found himself, as it were, in a Noah's ark, with a very few men and a great many beasts"—with the result that "he acted under a perpetual system of compromise—a compromise of greatness with meanness; a compromise of comprehension with narrowness; a compromise of the philosopher with the mere men of business, or with the yet coarser intellects who handle a truth which they were required to receive, as they would handle an ox which they were desired to purchase". For himself, Coleridge was convinced that the only true course was the opposite one. "Never can I

[1] *Biogr. Lit.*, ch. x.

believe but that the straight line must needs be the nearest; and that where there is the most, and the most unalloyed truth, there will be the greatest and the most permanent power of persuasion." Falsehoods are dangerous, chiefly because they are half-truths and "an erroneous system is best computed, not by an abuse of theory in general, nor by an absurd opposition of theory to practice, but by a detection of the errors in the particular theory. For the meanest of men has his theory, and to think at all is to theorize." [1]

True to this method, Coleridge recognizes (as Kant before him had done) the undeniable truth and the equally undeniable deductions from it with which the Rousseauite system commences. "Every man is born with the faculty of reason; and whatever is without it, be the shape what it may, is not a man or person but a thing. Hence the sacred principle recognized by all laws, human and divine, the principle, indeed, which is the ground-work of all law and justice, that a person can never become a thing, nor be treated as such without wrong." In other words, he can never be used altogether and merely as a means, but "must always be included in the end and form a part of the final cause". Hence, too, as the faculty of reason implies free agency, every rational being has the right of acting according to his own conscience, and "this right is inalienable except by guilt which is an act of self-forfeiture, and the consequences therefore to be considered as the

[1] *Loc. cit.*, essay iv.

criminal's own moral election". In this finally all men may be said to be equal, seeing that reason in this sense is a matter in which there are no degrees.

But to say this is one thing, to proceed to make the possession of reason in this sense the foundation of a system of politics prescribing the form of the Constitution, the rights of individuals, and the principles of legislation is quite another. This is to disregard "our mixed and sensitive nature", and the difficulty of adapting means to ends in the complicated circumstances of ordinary life. Yet the confusion once made, Rousseau's whole system follows with a certain mathematical precision as little applicable to human beings as pure geometry is to natural bodies. With this clue as to its fundamental error, Coleridge proceeds to trace the dialectic by which it is forced either to take account of probabilities and so abandon its first principle, or, holding to the principle, to involve itself in inconsistencies which will justify anything. This has often been done since, but perhaps never with the convincingness that, with recent events before him, Coleridge was able to impart to it.

Granting a sovereign assembly such as the principle of the possession by all equally of the qualification of reason required, consisting either of the citizens in person or of real representatives of them, the process by which the general will arising from the general reason displays itself has yet to be found. Rousseau's and (oddly enough Burke's)

way was to trust to the neutralization of opposite errors, as the winds rushing from all quarters at once with equal force may for the time produce a deep calm. But so far from being a deduction from the principle, this is a mere probability against which have to be weighed other and greater probabilities: "the lust of authority, the contagious nature of enthusiasm and other of the acute or chronic diseases of deliberative assemblies", and we find ourselves already beyond "the magic circle of the pure reason". Rousseau himself allows for this contingency. It is to meet it that he introduces the distinction between the *Volonté de tous* and the *Volonté générale* (i.e. between the collective will and the casual overbalance of wills). But this amounts to the admission that all he says in the *Contrat Social* of the sovereign will to which the right of universal legislation appertains applies to no one human being, to no society or assemblage of human beings, and least of all to the mixed multitude which makes up the people.

Coleridge fails to see the deeper meaning which later idealistic writers find in Rousseau's conception of the General Will as a way of indicating what he himself calls "the permanent self" of a nation, which is always seeking expression in its laws and institutions, however imperfect these may be; but he is undoubtedly right in going on to notice that, whatever Rousseau meant by it, the distinction was lost on the legislators of the Constituent Assembly. Seeking to apply the doctrine of the inalienable sovereignty of the people in its purity,

they could not proceed a step in their course of constitution-making without some glaring inconsistency. If reason is not susceptible of degrees, on what principle are women and children disfranchised? And if once you begin to introduce distinctions between classes, whence the preference for democratic or even representative institutions to any other? It was only therefore going a step farther along the same path when some of the French economists, devotees though they were of Rousseau, argued that, "no other laws being allowable but those which are demonstrably just and founded on the simplest ideas of reason, and of which every man's reason is the competent judge, it is indifferent whether one man, or one or more assemblies of men, give form and publicity to them". One step farther still and Napoleon could find justification for his claim to be the impersonation of reason, raised up and armed by Providence with irresistible power to realize its laws, in a system in which the greatest possible happiness of the people counts for nothing and the object of the governor is merely to preserve the freedom of all by coercing within the requisite bounds the freedom of each.

Returning to concrete facts, it is easy, Coleridge adds, from the single example of property, with which Governments from the first have been concerned, to show that under any circumstances except that of angelic society, an abstract equality, supposing it could be established and maintained, must be the fruitful source of all justice. "Were

there a race of men, a country and a climate that permitted such an order of things, the same causes would render all government superfluous."

What emerges from the criticism of these historical systems is that, while in the search for the first principles of political obligation, we have to start from the moral nature of man as constituting him an end in himself as against Hobbes, we cannot, with Rousseau, take this in the abstract as operating in a vacuum to which circumstances, both internal and external, are irrelevant. That circumstances and general consequences could not by themselves constitute the criterion of collective any more than individual action as maintained by Paley (and Bentham) Coleridge was further prepared to show in the course of making it clear that the crying want of his time was a theory of the nature of political obligation which, while including, should go beyond these popular half-truths.

Whether because his own ideas of the implications of his metaphysical principles were not as yet clear, or, as is more likely, because of the necessity he felt himself under in *The Friend* of "bribing the attention" of his readers by connecting theory with matters of popular interest at the time, he does not here further develop his views on the nature and binding force of political constitutions. He turns instead to the question of international right which was occupying the public mind, but not before offering a definition of the ends of Government equally removed from the irresponsibility of the Hobbesian State to the ideal

of freedom and from the *laissez faire* principle of the equal if limited freedom of all which had emerged as the logical issue of the Rousseauite. These were to be understood neither by the denial of all right in the subject, nor by the assertion of absolute and indefensible rights that could be enumerated in "Declarations", but by reference to the fundamental instincts and capacities of human nature. They consist of two kinds, the negative and the positive. "The negative ends are the protection of life, of personal freedom, of property, of reputation, and of religion from foreign and from domestic attacks. The positive ends are: First to make the means of subsistence more easy for each individual; secondly that in addition to the necessaries of life he should derive from the union and division of labour a share of the comforts and conveniences which humanize and ennoble his nature, and at the same time the power of perfecting himself in his own branch of industry by having those things which he needs provided for him by others among his fellow-citizens; the tools and raw materials necessary for his own employment being included. Thirdly the hope of bettering his own condition and that of his children"; seeing that "his Maker has distinguished him from the brute that perishes by making hope an instinct of his nature and an indispensable condition of his moral and intellectual progression . . Lastly, the development of those faculties which are essential to his human nature by the knowledge of his moral and religious duties, and

the increase of his intellectual powers in as great a degree as is compatible with the other ends of social union and do not involve a contradiction." Instruction, Coleridge held, is one of the ends of government (not because "we must educate our rulers" but), because "it is that only which makes the abandonment of the savage state an absolute duty, and that constitution is the best, under which the average sum of useful knowledge is the greatest and the causes that awaken and encourage talent and genius the most powerful and various".[1] In this definition it is not difficult to see the germ of what he was afterwards to develop in his noted theory of the identity of Church and State. Meantime the circumstances of the time were raising wider issues.

3. The Law of Nations[2]

As by other great wars, the question of the extention of moral law to international relations had been raised in an acute form by the Napoleonic. Coleridge had himself become involved in it by his journalistic defence of the bombardment of Copenhagen and the annexation of the Danish fleet in the conflict with Napoleon, and had been attacked by those who had denounced it as a violation of international right. By others the action had been defended in Parliament on the ground that, though a violation of right, it was justified by the urgency of the motive. In this confusion of the public mind he saw an opportunity at once

[1] *Loc. cit.*, essay ix. [2] *Loc. cit.*, ch. xiii.

of justifying his own attitude at the time and of stating, more clearly than he thought that Grotius, Puffendorf and the other great writers on the subject had done, the grounds of the difference in identity between individual and national right.

Holding, as he does, that "morality is no accident of human nature but its essential characteristic", it seemed to him "absurd that individuals should be under a law of moral obligation, and yet that a million of the same individuals acting collectively or through representatives should be exempt from all law". As well suppose that a grain of corn shall cease to contain flour as soon as it is part of a peck or a bushel. The wise men who have written on the law of nations have therefore been quite right in conceiving the community of nations after the analogy of communities of men: their co-proprietorship of allotments in the earth's surface, and their free agency in the disposal of them consistently with a like free agency of others constituting their national rights, and their function as "fellow-travellers in civilization" prescribing their national duties.[1] It is in the maintenance of these

[1] Coleridge's view of international duty with regard to the control of disease has peculiar interest at the present time: "Every Epidemic Disease," he writes, MS. C, p. 152, "every epidemic or endemic imported should awaken us to the deep interest which every man and every country has in the well-being of all men and in the consequent progressive humanization of the surface and with it of the atmosphere of the Planet itself. As Man, so the World he inhabits. It is his business and duty to *possess* it and rule it, to assimilate it to his own higher Nature. If instead of this he suffers himself to be possessed, ruled, and assimilated by it, he becomes an animal, who, like the African Negro or the South American Savage, is a mischief to Man even by the neglect of his function as a Man. The neglected Earth steams up poisons that *travel*."

rights on behalf of his fellow-countrymen and the development in them so far as possible of the faculties by which they are enabled to perform their corresponding duties that the patriot finds his true object. Such patriotism is, in fact, "itself a necessary link in the golden chain of our affections and virtues". It is therefore a false philosophy or a mistaken religion that would persuade us that "cosmopolitanism is nobler than nationality and the human race a sublimer object of love than a people". Granted that Plato, Luther, Newton, and their like belong to the world and to all ages, yet it was "in a circle defined by human affections" that they were produced—"here where the powers and interests of men spread without confusion through a common sphere, like the vibrations propagated in the air by a single human voice, distinct and yet coherent, and all uniting to express one thought and the same feeling".

From this it follows that for such patriotism we need no particular code of morals. We only require to be reminded that its objects are not to be accomplished by any system of general conquest (this would only end in the victor nation itself sinking into a mere province, probably the most abject of the empire it had created); nor by the annihilation of the State that happens to be its formidable rival, seeing that such rivalry tends to foster all the virtues by which national security is maintained. "Even in cases of actual injury and just alarm, the patriot sets bounds to the reprisal

of national vengeance, and contents himself with such securities as are compatible with the welfare, though not with the ambitious projects of the nation, whose aggressions have given the provocation: for as patriotism inspires no superhuman faculties, neither can it dictate any conduct that would require such. He is too conscious of his own ignorance of the future to dare extend his calculations into remote periods; nor, because he is a statesman, arrogates to himself the cares of Providence and the government of the world."

Ten years later Coleridge was prepared to express the same view of the moral basis of national independence with even deeper conviction: "Till States", he writes, "are in that self-standingness which admits of reciprocal action, the epoch of international morality is not yet come, the Records do not as yet belong to the World of Freedom, and we read of these things (wars and conquests) as of the most interesting parts of Natural History. None but the Vulgar felt (about?) Napoleon as they do (about) Alexander the Great. Napoleon was an APE. The difference in character in the conflicting nations was wanting. Not Greeks and Persians, but a wanton wicked civil war of a depraved knot of Co-Europeans against men of the same arts, sciences, and habits. France as a State obtaining no additional means of perfecting herself, it was no expansion required in order to self-development and therefore no expansion at all. War at present", he concludes, "ought to be spoken of by all men of genius as contemptible,

vulgar, the dotage of second childhood, the lechery of Barrenness." [1]

In a later passage in the same autograph notebook, referring to the events in the Netherlands of 1830, he applies the same idea to the old doctrine of Intervention. This in older times "was a *rule* and a wise one arising out of the particular state of the great European Confederacy from the Treaty of Westphalia to the French Revolution. Since then Europe has become too closely co-organized to allow of its having any practical application other than the truism . . we should do nothing without an adequate motive. On the same principle we might declare against all *War* with the proviso unless our national interests require it." But he does not think that this is any reason why we should be without "some principle from which a rule might be safely and convincingly deduced for the existing state of Europe", and he finds one in the distinction between "*the State* and the individual at the head of it and who perhaps may be at the head of three or four States, each having a distinct interest and no one of them having any interest in that Individual's being likewise the Head of a fifth State. The Emperor of Austria may have, or imagine himself to have, an interest in calling North Italy his against the will and the interest of the North Italians, but what interest

[1] MS. C, p. 85, slightly condensed. Most of us will agree to-day. We shall only ask why the limitation in the last sentence to "men of genius"?—unless we take it as an indication of the progress of opinion since Coleridge's time.

have the Bohemians, Tyrolese, Austrians in this? On the other hand, the *State* of Holland, the *State* of Prussia, and, had we had a sane ministry to see it, the *State* of Great Britain called for interference to crush the brute, insensate, ingrate rebellion of the Belgians, the monstrous hybridum of the wildest Jacobinism and the densest religious bigotry." [1] We may agree or disagree with Coleridge's judgment in the Belgian revolution of that date. But few will question the soundness of the principle he enunciates, and even this application of it suggests the question whether, had we intervened in the way he desired, the fatal events of 1914 would have been possible.

Returning to the argument in *The Friend*, having proved that "the law of nations is the law of common honesty", Coleridge has next to show [2] wherein the difference of application consists. He finds it in the one point of the comparatively small influence of example and precedent in the case of States, and goes on to find the reason of this difference in the difference of the circumstances. In the first place wherever there can be any dispute between what is required of an honest man and a true patriot, "the circumstances, which at once authorize and discriminate the measure, are so marked and peculiar and notorious, that it is incapable of being drawn into a precedent by any other State under dissimilar circumstances". This holds of ordinary cases. In extraordinary cases States simply "neither will, nor in the nature

[1] MS. C, p. 154.

[2] Essay xiv.

of things can, be determined by any other consideration but that of the imperious circumstances which render a particular measure advisable". But the most important difference is that "individuals are and must be under positive laws, and so great is the advantage of the regularity of legal decisions, that even equity must sometimes be sacrificed to it. For the very letter of a positive law is part of its spirit. But States neither are, nor can be, under positive laws. The only fixed part of the law of nations is the spirit; the letter of the law consists wholly in the circumstances to which the spirit of law is applied."

We may think that, in common with Hegel and others of his time, Coleridge was too despairing of the creation of anything like a code of positive international law, with its appropriate system of sanctions and precedents. Perhaps the most significant change in our own time is that while these writers held this to be impossible, however desirable it might be, some of us have come to think it possible, and only differ from one another as to its desirability in view of the extension of the reign of force involved in the creation of an international police. However we may differ from Coleridge in this, few, with the facts of the Great War before them, will disagree with the words that follow: "It is mere puerile declamation to rail against a country, as having imitated the very measures for which it had most blamed its ambitious enemy, if that enemy had previously changed all the relative circumstances which had existed for him,

and therefore rendered his conduct iniquitous; but which, having been removed, however iniquitously, cannot without absurdity be supposed any longer to control the measures of an innocent nation, necessitated to struggle for its own safety; especially when the measures in question were adopted for the very purpose of restoring these circumstances." Still fewer, among those at least who believe in the reality of an international justice, will refuse to Coleridge the credit of having been one of the first to attempt a clear statement of the identity beneath difference between it and that which we honour in the life of "the good neighbour and honest citizen".

4. The Idea of the Body Politic

As Coleridge's ideas on the nature of political justice were developed in close contact with questions that were agitating the public mind in the middle part of his life, so the development of his ideas on the nature of a political constitution had a close connection with the questions of social and political reform that were prominent in his later years. As we might expect from what has been already said of the more and more important place that the doctrine of Ideas came to occupy in his speculations, the discussion takes the form of an exposition of what constitutes the Idea of a political society.

The allusion at the outset of the discussion in

his book on the *Constitution of Church and State* [1] to the theory of the social contract gives it the air of a continuation of that in *The Friend*. While rejecting this in the form of a "conception" as "at once false and foolish", "incapable of historic proof as a fact and senseless as a theory", Coleridge assigns it a central place as an *idea*. As he had spoken in *The Friend* of "an original—more accurately an ever-originating contract" as "a very natural and significant mode of expressing the reciprocal duties of subject and sovereign", so now he writes of "the idea of an ever-originating social contract" as that which "constitutes the whole difference between subject and serf, between a commonwealth and a slave-plantation".[2] What is historical about it so far as England is concerned is that it is this difference that has been working more or less unconsciously in "the minds of our forefathers in their characters and functions as public men alike in what they resisted and in what they claimed; in the institutions and forms of polity which they established and with regard to those against which they more or less successfully contended". The idea has shown its reality not only as an actual force in their minds and consciences in prescribing their duty, in their claims and resistances, but as "the final criterion by which all particular frames of government must be tried;

[1] First ed. 1829. The quotations below are made from the 1852 edition with references to the corresponding place in Shedd's edition of the *Works*.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 15. Shedd, vi. p. 32.

for here only can we find the great constructive principles of our representative system in the light of which it can alone be ascertained what are excrescences and marks of degeneration; and what are native growths or changes naturally attendant on the progressive development of the original germ, symptoms of immaturity perhaps but not of disease". [1]

Important though this is for the interpretation of political history as more than a mere struggle of rival interests, Coleridge is aware that it is too general as an account of the operation of this idea in the actual working of the "constitution" and of the conditions of its health. He had rejected Rousseau's account of it under the form of a general will taken in abstraction from the actual wills of each and all, but he realized that he was thereby pledged to a better.

Starting [2] from the "metaphor so commensurate, so pregnant", of the "body politic", he makes use of it to bring out two distinctions which he considers fundamental in the working of the constitution. In the first place, corresponding to the distinction in living bodies between "the imponderable agents, magnetic or galvanic" and the ponderable fluids in the glands and vessels, we have that in the body politic between "the indeterminable but yet actual influences of intellect, information, prevailing principles, and tendencies", and "the regular definite and legally recognized

[1] *Op. cit*, p. 20. Shedd, *ibid.*, 35 (condensed).
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 100. Shedd, *ibid.*, 78 foll.

powers".[1] There is, however, this difference, that here the imponderables are capable of being converted into the ponderable by having measured and determinate political rights and privileges attached to them. In the due proportion of these two, the generally acting spiritual forces endowed with no definitely recognized means of expression, and those which act through legally constituted channels, Coleridge finds the first condition of political health. The Greek democracies were an instance of the excess of the former, "the permeative power deranging the functions and by ephorions shattering the organic structures which they should have enlivened". Venice, on the other hand, fell owing to the contrary extreme. As illustrations of lesser disproportions, he mentions the exclusion from civil rights of classes that have qualified for their exercise and the unfair representation in Parliament of particular interests. He saw nothing but a threat to the permanence and progress of the British nation in the existing state of parties and the under-representation of the industrial, mercantile, and professional classes.

The second distinction of which Coleridge finds

[1] What he means by these imponderables is well illustrated by what he says in a letter of September 24, 1821 (Alsopp, *Letters*, etc., p. 130), of what Graham Wallas calls our "Social Heritage": "It is a source of strength and comfort to know that the labours and aspirations and sympathies of the genuine and invisible Humanity exist in a social world of their own; that its attractions and assimilations are no Platonic fable, no dancing flames or luminous bubbles on the magic caldron of my wishes; but that there are, even in this unkind light, spiritual parentages and filiations of the soul."

an analogy in the physical organism is that between the "latent or dormant" and the "actual power" in the State. It is here that he approaches the central problem and touches without naming it the question of sovereignty. In the former distinction he had in view public opinion, sectional interests, currents of national feeling so far as they are unorganized and possess no recognized means of expression. These may be different and even opposed to the organized forms of national life, but they *need* not be. The distinction may be only a kind of "polarization" of elements usually acting in unison. But in the case of which he is now speaking there is and there ought to be a real distinction, and he goes on in a passage of great insight and originality to illustrate its value in the interest of political freedom from the case of England.

What, he asks, is the secret of the degree of freedom which England has enjoyed far in excess of the most democratic republics of either ancient or modern times or of that which "the wisest and most philanthropic statesmen or the great Commonwealth's men (the stars of that narrow interspace of blue sky between the black clouds of the first and the second Charles's reign) believed compatible the one with the safety of the State, the other with the interests of Morality"? [1] His answer

[1] He has an interesting note on the supposed exception of the United States of America. He is inclined, in view of the identity of stock, etc., to deny that they form an exception. But it illustrates the impression which some travellers brought back from America at that date (1829) that he quotes an epigram of one of them (a prejudiced one, he admits) to the effect that "where every man takes liberties there is little liberty for any man".

is that whereas both in democratic republics and in absolute monarchies the nation delegates the whole of its power to the extent of leaving "nothing obscure, nothing merely in idea unevolved, or acknowledged only as an indeterminate right", in the constitution of England the nation has delegated its power only with "measure and circumspection whether in respect of the donation of the trust or the particular interests entrusted" to the Government. Lawyers indeed speak of the "omnipotence of Parliament". If this refers to "the restraints and remedies within the competence of our law courts", it is only a "puffing and pompous way of stating a mere matter of fact". If taken in any other sense, it is an hyperbole which, in view of the actual composition of the Houses of Parliament and the "sharers in this earthly omnipotence", can merely rouse laughter. What the precise nature and extent of the power which the nation thus reserves to itself and which is not contained within the rule and compass of law, it is impossible to say. By its very nature it is indeterminable *a priori*, and must be conceived of as existing and working only as an idea—except, he adds, in the rare and predestined epochs of growth and reparation when the "predisposing causes and enduring effects prove the unific mind and energy of the nation to have been in travail". But it is *there* always as the last appeal—"that voice of the people which is the voice of God". He is conscious that his account of it might seem "fitter matter for verse than for sober argument", and is content to

conclude his exposition by quoting the old Puritan poet George Wither, who has given lasting expression to this idea in his *Vox Pacifica*.[1]

Short and somewhat disjointed as is the analysis here given of the elements of national consciousness and the conditions of political liberty, it marks a new achievement in English philosophy, anticipating much of the best thought of our own time as we have it in Green, Bosanquet, and others. Particularly significant in view both of recently held theories of the omnipotence of the State and the still more recent reactions against it in favour of political pluralism is the sanity with which Coleridge rejects both. "Coleridge", writes Dr. Cobban,[2] "was one of the first to denounce the theory of sovereignty in so many words, and that not because of the rival claims of any other association inside or outside the State, but because of the inherent extravagance of the conception itself. To overthrow State sovereignty

[1] London, 1645. T. H. Green, in his *Lectures on Political Obligation*, quotes Wither in a similar connection. The whole passage is worth quoting as Coleridge (though inaccurately) gives it.

> "Let not your King and Parliament in one,
> Much less apart, mistake themselves for that
> Which is most worthy to be thought upon:
> Nor think they are, essentially, the State.
> Let them not fancy that th' authority
> And privileges upon them bestown,
> Conferr'd are to set up majesty,
> A power, or a glory, of their own!
> But let them know, 'twas for a deeper life
> Which they but represent—
> That there's on earth a yet auguster thing
> Veil'd tho' it be than Parliament or King."

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 183.

and substitute for it the sovereignty of a thousand and one petty groups, as some political thinkers have attempted to do, is a mere multiplication of evil. Coleridge goes on different principles. Against the Imperial and Papal theory of sovereignty, he asserts the national and Protestant principles of the individual conscience and the national consciousness, things which cannot be defined in terms of institutional sovereignties." I should merely add that the mention of individual conscience and national consciousness as though they were entirely different raises just the question which Coleridge's philosophy, with its doctrine of a deeper community of souls in family, nation, ultimately in the All, as the ground of the rights of sovereign and subject alike, was the attempt to give the answer.

5. Practical Applications

Not less interesting to-day are the practical applications which he makes of these ideas. His view of the ends of government, as we have seen, was that besides what he calls the negative aims, namely, the safety of the State and the protection of life and property within it for all its members, there are great positive ends which he enumerates as: (1) making the means of subsistence easier for each individual; (2) securing to each the hope of betterment; (3) the development of the facilities essential to his humanity. However distant from the ideal mark, owing to the existing circumstances of a nation, the statesman might actually find

himself, every movement, Coleridge held, ought to be in the direction of realizing these objects.

In his own time the main hindrances to the first two were to be found in the views that were held and the practices that had come to be recognized as to the rights of property. Coleridge was no revolutionary, and it is easy to find matter for ridicule in the timidity with which the philosopher sometimes expresses himself. But he is clear and consistent in the summons he addresses to the State to do all that it can to control private possessions in the interest of the community, and to refuse absolutely to recognize "claims that, instead of being contained in the rights of its proprietary trustees, are encroachments on its own rights and a destructive trespass on a part of its own inalienable and untransferable property—the health, strength, honesty, and filial love of its children".[1]

He had in view chiefly the land, which was still the main form of property in England; but these principles were valid also for what was rapidly coming to be an even more decisive factor in the national life—the private ownership of capital; and all that he says of the necessity of a reversion to the functional view of property applies equally to this. He wrote and published two pamphlets in favour of Sir Robert Peel's[2] Bill to regulate the employment of children in cotton factories in 1818, of which he speaks as the first instance of the interference of the legislature "with what is ironi-

[1] *Lay Sermons*, p. 252. Shedd, vi. 217.

[2] Lancashire manufacturer and father of the future Prime Minister.

cally called Free Labour—daring to prohibit soul-murder on the part of the rich, and self-slaughter on that of the poor". He adds: "From the borough of Hell I wish to have no representatives."[1]

It is in connection with the last of the three ends of the State as stated above that Coleridge develops his famous doctrine of the Church and its relation to the State. The Church, according to the "idea" of it, is not something separate from the State, but the State just in its function of securing this object, which in the present connection is restated as that of "providing for every native that knowledge and those attainments which are necessary to qualify him for a member of the State, the free subject of a civilized realm".[2] Valuable and indispensable as religion may be for these objects, the teaching of religion is not the chief function of the Church. Coleridge would have a "parson" in every parish, but the real "clerisy" of the nation are the learned of all denominations and professions—"in short, all the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the theological".[3]

There is no need at this date to criticize the doctrine and the proposals which accompanied it. National development has taken a different course throughout the civilized world from that which

[1] See *Letters*, ii. p. 689 n.; *Two Addresses*, Ed. Edmund Gosse (1913); and Lucy E. Watson's *Coleridge at Highgate* (1925), p. 74 ff.
[2] *Church and State*, pp. 84 and 85. Shedd, vi. p. 70.
[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 54–5. Shedd, vi. 53.

Coleridge hoped it would, so far as *names* are concerned. But more and more States are recognizing the objects which he emphasizes and, in proportion as their function of armed defence comes to be superseded by other more effective guarantees of security, will find themselves more and more at liberty to devote themselves to their promotion. How far in the pursuit of them they will have to ally themselves with the great religious tradition, either by seeking the aid of the Church or by embodying in their own educational system the best elements in its teaching, the future alone can show. It will largely depend on how statesmen interpret what is of essential and of permanent value in theology, and how theologians interpret the spiritual function of the State.

If we try to sum up Coleridge's view of political society we shall, I believe, find the root and essence of it in the idealistic principle which may be said to be the sum of all his thinking that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. In becoming a member of a society the individual acquires new characters and becomes something different from what he was before. "Each man", he writes, "in a numerous society is not only co-existent with but virtually organized into the multitude of which he is an integral part. His *idem* is modified by the *alter*. And there arise impulses and objects from his synthesis of *alter et idem*, myself and my neighbour." It is for this reason that when he passes from society to the State, while recognizing in the

idea of the physical organism no more than a useful metaphor, he finds no better way of describing the body politic than as an organic whole. "The State", he says, "is synonymous with a constituted realm, kingdom, commonwealth or nation; that is where the integral parts, classes or orders are so balanced or so interdependent as to constitute more or less a moral unit, an organic whole." It is the mention of the "balance" and the qualification of "more or less" doubtless that leads Dr. Cobban,[1] in quoting these passages, to say that Coleridge, like Burke, "adopts a position intermediate between the organic and the mechanistic theories" of the nature of the State. We have seen to what extent Coleridge agreed with Burke and nothing could be more instructive than a comparison of their views. But there is this difference between them, besides that which Coleridge himself notices, that while in the statesman's mind the balance actually attained by the British Constitution dominated all his thinking, and the "moral unit" was interpreted in terms of what he saw before him, Coleridge regarded all actual Constitutions, including that of his own country, as temporary and imperfect embodiments of an "idea" that was slowly revealing itself on earth, if not as a city of God, at any rate as a society of seekers after Him. And the source of this vital difference was the despised metaphysical root of the poet's thought.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 185.

CHAPTER VII

THEORY OF FINE ART

"Beauty too is spiritual, the shorthand hieroglyphic of Truth—the mediator between Truth and Feeling, the Head and the Heart. The sense of Beauty is implicit knowledge—a silent communion of the Spirit with the Spirit in Nature, not without consciousness, though with the consciousness not successively unfolded."—MS. *Semina Rerum*, p. 97.

1. Contemporary Aesthetics

There was no department in which the defects of the Hartleian philosophy were more glaring than in aesthetic [1] theory. In the *Observations on Man*, imagination is dismissed in a short paragraph in a section devoted to "Dreams". The sense of Beauty is treated of under the head of "Pleasures and Pains of Imagination". Beauty in nature is explained as a transference of "miniatures" of pleasant tastes, smells, etc., "upon rural scenes"; beauty in art, including poetry, as the result of successful imitation of Nature. When, as in the professed writers on "Taste", the hard-worked principle of Association was combined with hide-bound adherence to the neo-classical modes, and the social snobbery of the time, it is easy to imagine what the result was likely to be.[2]

[1] Though disliking the word, as unfamiliar, for "works of taste and criticism", Coleridge found it "in all respects better and of more reputable origin than billetristic", at that time its rival.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, October 1821.

[2] Treating of Colour in his *Essay on Taste* (published in 1790, in its sixth edition in 1825), Archibald Alison, the best known probably of the Scottish "aesthetic empirics", writes: "The common Colours, for instance, of many indifferent things which surround us, of the

It did not require an acquaintance with the great contemporary revival of aesthetic philosophy in Germany to convince Coleridge of the fatuity of the whole system of British aesthetics; and Saintsbury is undoubtedly right in waving aside the controversy as to the relation between him and the Schlegels, and in setting down the resemblance as "mainly one of attitude—one of those results of 'skyey influences' which constantly manifest themselves" [1] in different persons of genius and talent

Earth, of Stone, of Wood, etc., have no kind of Beauty, and are never mentioned as such. The things themselves are so indifferent to us, that they excite no kind of Emotion and, of consequence, their Colours produce no greater Emotion, as the signs of such qualities, than the qualities themselves. The Colours, in the same manner, which distinguish the ordinary dress of the common people, are never considered as Beautiful. It is the Colours only of the Dress of the Great, of the Opulent, or of distinguished professions, which are never considered in this light. The Colours of common furniture, in the same way, are never beautiful: it is the colours only of fashionable, or costly or magnificent Furniture, which are considered as such. It is observable, further, that even the most beautiful Colours (or those which are expressive to us of the most pleasing Associations), cease to appear beautiful whenever they are familiar. The Blush of the Rose, the Blue of a serene Sky, the Green of the Spring are Beautiful only when they are new and unfamiliar", and so on through what George Saintsbury calls "long chains of only plausibly connected propositions" which with the school were the substitute for actual reasoning: "the turning round of the key being too often (one might say invariably) taken as equivalent to the opening of the lock" (*History of Criticism*, pp. 165–6.) It is this kind of thing that Carlyle pillories at the beginning of his *French Revolution*. "No Divinity any longer dwelt in the world; and as men cannot do without a Divinity, a sort of terrestrial upholstery one had been got together, and named Taste, with medallic virtuosi and picture *cognoscenti*, and enlightened letter and *belles-lettres* men enough for priests."

[1] *History of Criticism*, p. 396, n. 1. The whole passage is in general harmony with the view taken in this study as to the relation of Coleridge's ideas to German philosophy.

more or less simultaneously. Saintsbury is speaking of Coleridge as a critic—"one of the very greatest critics in the world",[1] but what he says of him in this capacity in respect to the Schlegels is true of him in his capacity as philosopher in respect to the aesthetic theories of Kant and Schelling, of which these literary critics may be said to have been only the most popular exponents. Yet it may well have been under German influence that in a letter of October 1800 he writes of an "Essay on Poetry" as more "at his heart" than anything else.[2]

Up to 1818 he had produced only fragmentary essays: on *Taste* (1810), on the *Principles of General Criticism* (1814), and on *Beauty* (1818). In the *Preliminary Treatise on Method* in the latter year he assigns to Aesthetics "a middle position" in his formal classification of the sciences, between those which, like physics, deal with sensory facts by hypothetical constructions, and those which, like metaphysics, are concerned with "laws" apprehended through the Ideas of the reason. The fine arts, he there explains, "certainly belong to the outward world, for they operate by the images of sight and sound and other sensible impressions, and, without a delicate tact for these, no man ever was or could be either a musician or a poet, nor could he attain excellence in any one of these arts; but as certainly he must always be a poor and

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 206.

[2] He adds characteristically that "its title would be on the elements of poetry, it would be in reality a disguised system of morals and politics". Cp. Letters of February 1801 and July 1802.

unsuccessful cultivator of the arts, if he is not impelled by a mighty inward force; nor can he make great advance in his art if in the course of his progress the obscure impulse does not gradually become a bright and clear and burning Idea".[1]

With a subject, as he tells us, so much at his heart, and with so fine a text, it is surprising that, even in one so dilatory as Coleridge habitually was, nothing approaching a systematic treatment of it was ever attempted by him, and we have to gather his views on aesthetic from even more scattered sources than in the other main heads of his philosophy, with little to supplement them in the manuscript remains. The explanation may partly have been the reluctance of a man to revisit, as a land-surveyor, a country where he had once been a prince and a ruler, but far more the concentration of his interest, as years went on, on the philosophy of religion. Fortunately in the above-mentioned fragments, combined with what he says in the more familiar passages on the subject in the *Biographia Literaria*, there is sufficient to reconstruct at least in outline his general theory of art.[2]

2. Psychological and Metaphysical Data

In view of the defects of current theories what he felt to be required was first a psychology that would

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 69. The passage may well have suggested to Browning his account of the poet's aim: "Not what man sees, but what God sees—the Ideas of Plato, seeds of Creation, lying burningly in the Divine Hand—it is towards these he struggles."—*Essay on Shelley.*

[2] What follows is deeply indebted to Mr. Shawcross's excellent account in his edition of this book, vol. i. pp. 47 foll.

explain the working of imagination as not merely a reproductive, but a creative process; and, secondly, a metaphysic that would account for the appeal which its creations make to what is deepest in the soul of man.

Coleridge had reflected profoundly on the process by which poetic images are generated in the mind. No psychologist has ever had a better opportunity of first-hand observation of it in his own mind, and there is no reason to believe that he here owed anything at all to German philosophy. He had broken with the associationist philosophy, but he had no intention of discarding association itself as properly interpreted. What he was led to hold as opposed to the current intellectualistic account was "that association depends in a much greater degree on the recurrence of resembling states of feeling than trains of ideas". From this it at once followed that "a metaphysical solution (like Hartley's) that does not instantly tell you something in the heart is grievously to be suspected". He adds with a flash of his usual insight:

"I almost think that ideas never recall ideas, as far as they are ideas, any more than leaves in a forest create each other's motion. The breeze it is runs thro' them—it is the soul of state of feeling. If I had said no one idea ever recalls another I am confident that I could support the assertion." [1]

One regrets that he did not do so at length, but in these statements, under which, as he says, "Hartley's system totters", it is not difficult to see

[1] *Letter to Southey*, August 7, 1803 (*Letters*, 1895 ed., i. p. 428).

an anticipation of recent reforms in the psychology of association.[1] What we have since learned is that the dominating factor in the process of suggestion, whereby imagination bodies forth the forms of things, both known and unknown, is not the temporal or spatial adjacency which the psychologists call "contiguity", but "continuity of interest"[2] —the emotional occupation of the mind with a significant idea, summoning from the depths of its experience the elements necessary for its expansion into a whole of meaning. British psychology in Coleridge's time was as yet too undeveloped to provide a complete scheme, not to speak of a language, into which such a doctrine could fit. It was all the more to his credit that he was able to break away from existing schemes and affirm a principle which made them thenceforth an anachronism.

But to have demonstrated the place of emotion and interest in the process of revival was only the first step in the required reconstruction of aesthetic theory. If the work of imagination is merely revival, poetic creation is still unexplained. It was in taking this second step, probably, that Coleridge chiefly found help in his study of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, particularly in the recognition, in addition to the reproductive function of imagination, of another to which he attributes not only a pro-

[1] Saintsbury, *op. cit.*, p. 166, notes as one of the main fallacies of associationist aesthetics, "the constant confusion of Beauty with interest". Cp. Bosanquet's criticism of it in *Science and Philosophy*, essay xxiii, on "The Nature of Aesthetic Emotion".

[2] G. F. Stout's phrase. See *Manual of Psychology*, 3rd ed., p. 558.

ductive activity of its own, but something of the fruitful and inexhaustible character of noumenal reality itself.[1]

It was for just such an extension of its functions that Coleridge was looking; and when he came upon it in his early excursions into German philosophy he eagerly seized upon it as giving him the desired hint. But it was only a hint. For if, as Kant held, the work of the imagination was continuous with that of the understanding, merely preparing the way for its exercise in the wilderness of the sensory manifold, and if the understanding in the end gives us no more than a world of appearance, a like limitation would have to be imposed on the deeper faculty. Under such conditions it would be impossible to find in the work of the poet and artist any analogue to the Creative Intelligence of which the world is the embodiment. Unless the activity of the productive imagination were conceived of as in some way identical with that of the Divine Imagining, it would be impossible to justify the claim of poet and artist to be seers and revealers of essential reality.

It was just this identity that Schelling[2] had sought to establish in opposition to the element of subjectivism in Kant and Fichte. Nature according to Schelling was not the creation of mind, it *was* mind, albeit as yet in unconscious form. Nature in the narrower sense of which science speaks is not

[1] See Professor Norman Kemp Smith, in *Commentary on the Critique of the Pure Reason*, p. 264.

[2] Schelling's *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* was published in 1797.

the thing-in-itself. Natural science abstracts from the meanings which Nature symbolizes and takes it as something merely finite. It is the function of art, therefore, as representing a higher level of the primeval activity of which both nature and mind are manifestations, to portray directly and concretely what science and philosophy can describe only abstractly. From the point of view thus reached it is possible to represent the work of the imagination as continuous not merely with the understanding, as Kant did, but as continuous with the creative work of the divine intelligence itself.

"To one and the same intelligence", Schelling had written, "we owe both the ideal world of art and the real world of objects. Working unconsciously it gives us the world of reality, working consciously it gives us the world of art. The world of Nature is nothing more than the primeval, though still unconscious (and therefore unpurified) poetry of the Spirit. It is for this reason that it may be said that in the Philosophy of Art we have the universal organ and the keystone of the vault of philosophy." "For", as he goes on to explain, "it is in the work of art that the problem of the division which philosophy makes between thought and things first finds its solution: in this the division ceases, idea and reality merge in the individual representation. Art thus effects the impossible by resolving an infinite contradiction in a finite product"—a result it achieves through the power of the "productive intuition" we call "Imagination".[1]

[1] See *Werke*, vol. iii. p. 349.

We can understand how, when he came on all this in Schelling, Coleridge thought he had found a "congenial coincidence".[1] He was unfortunate in the term "esemplastic", which looked like a mistranslation of the German *Ineinsbildung*:[2] he was still more unfortunate in the plagiarized passages from Schelling, which he prefixed as a kind of *apparatus criticus* to his own theory of the imagination: but he made no mistake in the value he attached to these ideas for a true theory of art in general and of poetry in particular. They only needed to be adapted to the personalistic metaphysics, which he sought to substitute for the pantheistic impersonalism of Schelling. He has suffered from his failure anywhere to work out in detail the reorientation of his views that this change involved in the theory of art, to the same extent as he did in the theory of nature. But there are abundant hints of how he came to conceive not only of the sense of beauty as a form of personal communication with the Spirit revealed in Nature, but of art as the interpreter of its life, and it is only fair to give him credit for this advance upon Schelling. Even what he says in his earlier mood of the selflessness and impersonality of genius, and the experience out of which it speaks is quite compatible with what he later came to hold of the conditions of a selfhood and individuality, which

[1] "Perhaps", observes Leslie Stephen, "the happiest circumlocution ever devised for what Pistol calls 'conveying'."—*Hours in a Library*, iv. p. 351.

[2] In *Anima Poetae* we find esenoplastic substituted for esemplastic—a less ambiguous translation.

rest on quite other foundations than "the sensation of self",[1] however much this may be necessary as a phase of its development.

Be this as it may, when we try to take his philosophy of beauty and the artistic imagination as a whole, it is easy to see that the ideas that underlie it are, not anything for which he need have been directly indebted to Schelling, but *first* the old distinction between *natura naturata* and *natura naturans*—Nature as a dead mechanism, and Nature as a creative force essentially related to the soul of man, which so often forms his text: "Believe me", he exclaims in one of the later manuscript passages, "you must master the essence, the *natura naturans* which presupposes a bond between Nature in the higher sense and the soul of man"; and *secondly* the view that, while Nature is truly thought and intelligence, "the rays of intellect are scattered throughout the images of Nature" as we know her, and require to be focussed for us by the genius of man if we are to have them in their full splendour: "To make the external internal, the internal external, to make Nature thought, and thought Nature—this is the mystery of genius in the Fine Arts". What we call beauty is the condensed expression of this "thought". For "this too is spiritual, this is the shorthand hieroglyphic of truth—the mediator between truth and feeling, the head and the heart. The sense (of) beauty is implicit knowledge—a silent communion of the spirit with the spirit of Nature, not without

[1] See p. 143 above.

consciousness, though with the consciousness not successively unfolded." To the sensitive mind the beauty of a landscape, which to the sensualist is only "what a fine specimen of caligraphy is to an unalphabeted rustic", is "music", and the very "rhythm of the soul's movements".[1]

It is in the light of this general theory of the nature of beauty that the familiar passages in the *Biographia Literaria* and the fragment on *Poesy or Art* upon poetic imagination, taste, and the place of imitation must be read.

3. Poetic Imagination

His theory of the first is given in the passages, familiar to students of literature, in which, discarding the heavy German panoply, he expresses his own view of the two forms of Imagination, and of "the poet described in ideal perfection". "The Imagination then I consider either as primary or secondary. The primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am.

[1] *Semina Rerum*, MS. C, p. 97. In a marginal note in his copy of *Kant's Logik* (handbook, edited by G. B. Dasche), p. 9, criticizing Kant for his approval of a writer who denies the existence of *a priori* rules determining aesthetic judgment, Coleridge writes: "This is true in part only. The principles (as it were the skeleton) of Beauty rest on *a priori* Laws no less than Logic. The Kind is constituted by Laws inherent in the Reason; it is the *degree*, that which enriches the *formalis* (*e*?) into the *formosum*, that calls in the aid of the senses. And even this, the sensuous and sensual ingredient, must be an analogon to the former."

The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate: or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead. Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counters to play, but fixities and definities. The Fancy is, indeed, no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of space and time; and blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word Choice. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association."[1]

Coming in the next chapter to the nature of

[1] *Biographia Literaria*, ch. xiii. Cp. ch. iv, where he illustrates the distinction between imagination and fancy in more detail. In his Essay on *Poetry as Observation and Description*, Wordsworth declares that "fancy is given to quicken and beguile the temporary part of our nature, Imagination to incite and support the eternal". Nominally Wordsworth is criticizing Coleridge's definition of the Fancy as "the aggregative and associative power" on the ground that it is "too general" (see Coleridge's reply, *Biog. Lit.*, Shawcross, p. 112 *fin.*). In reality he is developing it with his own more massive power and suggesting a phraseology to describe it, as in the phrase "meditative Imagination", which reappears in Ruskin's well-known classification in the *Stones of Venice*, of the associative, the contemplative, and the penetrative uses of this faculty. What Coleridge contributes is a metaphysics which he would have claimed makes all our thoughts upon the subject in his own phrase "corrosive on the body", by connecting the distinction with his favourite one between reason and understanding, as he does here by implication, explicitly in *Lay Sermons* (Appendix B).

poetry, he admits that there may be poems which have pleasure for their immediate object. The admission has puzzled some of his critics, who have failed to notice that the pleasure he alludes to is of a peculiar kind, corresponding to the satisfaction of no casual appetites, but to what he elsewhere calls "the two master impulses and movements of man—love of variety and love of uniformity".[1] He allows further for poetry, such as we find without metre in Plato, Isaiah, Jeremy Taylor, and even in scientific treatises which have truth for their immediate object. In this wider sense poetic imagination would be synonymous with the genius which he describes in *The Friend* as the power "to find no contradiction in the union of old and new; to contemplate the *Ancient of Days* and all his works with feelings as fresh as if all had then sprung forth at the first creative fiat", the power which "characterizes the mind that feels the riddle of the world, and may help to unravel it".[2]

But he was not the man to confuse powers in reality as different as the purpose and the material are different in poetry and philosophy, and he goes on to give his idea of the work of the poet "described in ideal perfection", as one "who brings the whole

[1] *Anima Poetae*, p. 153. Cp. the continuation of the marginal note quoted above: "It is not every agreeable that can form a component part of Beauty", and what he says of the "poetical method" in *Principles of the Science of Method*, p. 41, as requiring "above all things a preponderance of pleasurable feeling, and, where the interest of the events and characters and passions is too strong to be continuous without becoming painful, . . . what Schlegel calls a musical alleviation of our sympathy".

[2] *Op. cit.*, ch. iv.

soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends and (as it were) fuses each into each by that synthetic and magical power to which I would exclusively appropriate the name Imagination. This power, first put into action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed control (*laxis effertur habenis*), reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry."[1]

To critics who take little interest in psychological analysis or philosophical theory such a description naturally appears to be merely ringing the changes on verbal distinctions.[2] But this is to forget the

[1] Ch. xiv.

[2] See J. W. Mackail, in *Coleridge's Literary Criticism*. Cp. *per contra* Leslie Stephen's remark: "Coleridge's peculiar service to English criticism consisted in great measure in a clear appreciation of the true relation between the faculties (poetical and logical)." *Op. cit.*, p. 350.

devastation which the emaciated accounts current in Coleridge's time of the work of the imagination had spread in men's minds upon the whole subject, and the necessity of an energetic assertion of the presence of the element of passion combined with penetrative reflection, fundamental sanity of judgment, and a form of expression that would give some sense of the inner harmony of the material presented to the mind and therewith of the essential truth of the presentation.

In view of all this there is no clause in the definition which we would willingly spare, however differently modern taste might desire to have it expressed. The account errs rather by defect than by excess, seeing that it contains no detailed reference to the kind of diction which Coleridge conceived of as essential to poetry ("the best words", as he elsewhere expresses it, "in the best order"), in the sense in which he is here using the term. But he does not forget this, and in his discussion of it later in the *Biographia*, particularly in his criticism of Wordsworth's heresy, he makes ample amends. This falls outside of our subject. What we have here to note is the liberation which this new insight into the nature and the work of imagination brought to his own mind and the confidence with which it inspired him in all he afterwards wrote.

4. Imitation in Art

While Coleridge was more interested in poetry than in the plastic arts, and first developed his theory

of the imagination with a view to a true understanding of what was greatest in the poetry of his own country, he enables us to see how he applied these ideas to art in general. In his essay on *Poesy or Art*[1] he closely follows Schelling in his discussion of the sense in which art is imitative. If the function of the imagination is to unite sameness with difference, art can never consist in merely copying nature. Mere sameness as in a waxwork disgusts because it deceives. True imitation, as compared with mere copying, starts from an acknowledged difference. Starting from this, every touch of Nature gives the pleasure of approximation to truth. But the truth is not to nature in the limited meaning of the word, as the object of mere sense experience. The world we meet in art is the world of sense, but it is the world of sense twice-born, and appearing in that "unity of the shapely and the vital which we call beauty". It is this uniqueness and intuitiveness of the experience which makes it something wholly inexplicable by "association". It often depends on the *rupture* of association. So too with "interest". So far from being derivable from interest in the narrower sense of the term, "beauty is all that inspires pleasure without and aloof from and even contrary to interest".

Here Coleridge's idea of Nature, as above explained, came to his aid. There is an inner and an outer nature, and the imitation must be of that which is within. "The artist must imitate that which is within the thing, for so only can he hope to

[1] Shawcross, ii. p. 253.

produce any work truly natural in the object, and truly human in the effect." [1]

5. The Place of Taste

It was a merit in contemporary writers on "taste" to recognize the place in art of the emotional response which they called "sensibility". Their mistake was to interpret this as a form of self-feeling. On a view like Coleridge's the whole emphasis fell upon depth of feeling, but it was feeling for a world in which the self in any personal sense no longer occupied a place, but might be said, as in love, to have "passed in music out of sight". "Sensibility, indeed", he wrote,[2] "both quick and deep, is not only a characteristic feature, but may be deemed a component part, of genius. But it is not less an essential mark of true genius, that its sensibility is excited by any other cause more powerfully than by its own personal interests; for this plain reason, that the man of genius lives most in the ideal world, in which the present is still constituted by the future or the past; and because his feelings have been habitually associated with thoughts and images, to the number, clearness, and vivacity of which the sensation is always in inverse proportion."

Taste then there must indeed be by which the

[1] See what Miss Snyder says on Coleridge's *Theory of Imitation* as an illustration of the union of opposites, *The Critical Principle of the Reconciliation of Opposites* as employed by Coleridge, p. 50 foll.

[2] *Biographia Literaria* (Shawcross), ii. p. 65.

genuine can be distinguished from the spurious, "the proper offspring of genius from the changelings which the gnomes of vanity or the fairies of fashion may have laid in its cradle or called by its name".[1] But the word is burdened with associations derived from its primary sensory meaning, especially of passivity and natural instinctiveness, and thus fails to bring out the dependence of the thing on experience, meditation, and the acquired power of recognizing, as intuitively as the trained scientist recognizes truth by its own light, words and images fit to give "the touch of nature" to the material in hand. It is this defect that Coleridge seeks to remedy in the definition he has given to taste. Taste, he tells us, is "an attainment after a poet has been disciplined by experience, and has added to genius that talent by which he knows what part of his genius he can make acceptable and intelligible to the portion of mankind for which he writes".[2] And again it is "such a knowledge of the facts, material and spiritual, that most appertain to his art, as, if it have been governed and applied by good sense, and rendered instinctive by habit, becomes the representative and reward of our past conscious reasonings, insights and conclusions".[3] For this reason there can be no rules for the exercise of taste any more than for imagination. "The rules of Imagination are themselves the very powers of growth and production. Could a rule be given from

[1] *Op. cit.*, ii. p. 65.
[2] Shawcross, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 281.
[3] *Op. cit.*, ii. p. 64.

without, poetry would cease to be poetry and sink into a mechanical art." [1]

6. Theory and Practice in Literary Criticism

It was in this way that Coleridge carried the theory of beauty in nature and art, and especially in the art of poetry, as far beyond anything hitherto current in England, as he carried the art of literary criticism beyond anything that had been achieved by his predecessors. Yet this union in him of a genius for criticism, second only to the very greatest, with the metacritical craving for a theory of aesthetic, has aroused the same suspicion among literary men as the union of the poet and the metaphysician already discussed.[2]

To those who hold that aesthetic theory is a species of "Bohemian glass" and distrust its "false subtlety", or who accept Schlegel's witty definition of it as "the salt which dutiful disciples are going to put upon the tail of the Ideal (enjoined upon them as so necessary to poetry) as soon as they get near enough", will be prepared to ask with

[1] *Op. cit.* With these views on taste and sensibility should be taken what Wordsworth has written to like effect. See *Prose Works*, vol. ii. pp. 82, 87, 131, where sensibility as a mark of the poet is associated with wide knowledge of human nature, earnest observation and contemplation of the "goings-on of the Universe"; and p. 127, where he declares that "the profound and the exquisite in feeling the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or, in ordinary language, the pathetic and the sublime: are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor—Taste".

[2] Above, p. 44.

Saintsbury [1] whether Coleridge is not "just so much the more barren in true criticism as he expatiates further in the regions of sheer philosophy", or even with J. W. Mackail [2] to reject his whole theory of poetry as "a large incoherent abstraction inapplicable and fortunately unapplied by him to the body of the criticism of which it is the introduction".

But this would be wholly to mistake the function of a philosophy of beauty, and the distinction between it and the art of criticism. The distinction is not, as Saintsbury would have it, "that Philosophy is occupied by matters of the pure intellect; and literary criticism is busied with matters which, though not in the loosest meaning, are matters of sense".[3] It is true that philosophy is concerned with theory, but, since the theory is of life in all its departments, it is concerned with will and feeling as well as with intellect. It takes all experience: moral, aesthetic, intellectual: the sense of duty, what Saintsbury calls "the amorous peace of the poetic moment", the love of truth, as its data. If any of them is not there, philosophy cannot give it. Theory or no theory, each man has to depend on

[1] Who quotes these criticisms. *Op. cit.*, p. 353, n. 6, and p. 396.

[2] *Coleridge's Literary Criticism.* Introduction. (London, 1908.) With the view here implied of the relation of Coleridge's theory to his practice of criticism we may contrast that of Lowell, quoted by Miss Snyder (*op. cit.*, p. 36), according to which his philosophy of polar opposites "served to sharpen his critical insight", while the union of it with concrete observations "resulted in a criticism that does more than deepen the layman's appreciation of the works criticized".

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 142.

his own sensitiveness to the unique quality involved in particular forms of experience. What philosophy seeks to do is to understand wherein this unique quality consists; what it implies as to the world which is thus experienced; and, finally, how these experiences and the worlds that correspond to them are related to one another. It may be able to go but a small way in this, but it is bound to go as far as it can, and is at least justified in going so far as to indicate the falsity of theories which, like that of the Associationists in the present case, not only fail to understand, but would dissolve the experience altogether by resolving it into something quite different. If there are "Happy Warriors" for truth and beauty, who find the appeal to the heart that has "felt" sufficient, and who can afford to neglect such defensive theorizing, there are others less happy, whose minds are disturbed and their feelings confused by inadequate theories, and to whom more adequate ones may be a real help to full enjoyment.

Quite apart from this, moreover, there are those to whom metaphysic may itself be a form of "that immortal fire which", as Saintsbury eloquently puts it, "each generation keeps burning to soften what is harsh, feed what is starved, anoint and cheer and clean what is stiffened and saddened and soiled in the nature of man".[1] We know at any rate that these were the things that Coleridge sought and thought that he found in metaphysics. "What is it", he asks,[2] "that I employ my metaphysics on?

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 334.

[2] *Anima Poetae*, p. 42.

To perplex our clearest notions and living moral instincts? To extinguish the light of love and of conscience, to put out the life of arbitrament, to make myself and others worthless, soulless, Godless? No, to expose the folly and the legerdemain of those who have thus abused the blessed organ of language, to support all old and venerable truths, to support, to kindle, to project, to make the reason spread light over our feelings, to make our feelings diffuse vital warmth through our reason—these are my objects and these my subjects. Is this the metaphysic that bad spirits in hell delight in?"

If there are those to whom these words make no appeal, it might be well for them to ask whether the fault is in Coleridge or not rather in themselves. For the particular metaphysic of beauty, with which we have in this chapter been concerned, we need not be deterred even by the great authority of the writers I have named from claiming its due. Fragmentary as it is, eked out, as at one time it certainly was, by studies from Kant and Schelling, it marked a new starting-point in British aesthetics. It gave us for the first time in England the elements of a theory, in the light of which the poetry that, along with political freedom, is her most characteristic contribution to civilization, can be better understood, the enjoyment of it can be made a more understanding enjoyment.

CHAPTER VIII

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

"Religion unites in its purposes the desiderata of the speculative and the practical being; its acts, including its events, are truths and objects of philosophic insight, and *vice versa* the truths in which it consists are to be considered as acts and manifestations of that being who is at once the Power and the Truth, the Power and the All-powerful, the Truth and the True."—MS. B.

1. Specific Problems of Religious Philosophy

There is a sense in which Coleridge's whole philosophy was a Philosophy of Religion. He was himself willing to speak of it as a Theosophy, even as a Theognosy—a knowledge of God, to which all other knowledges led up. "I have considered theognosy (*ὡς περὶ τῶν ἀχρόνων*), physiology, and anthropology", he writes,[1] "not as religion, but as the antecedent grounds and conditions of religion." This followed from his view of religion itself as the highest exercise of the human spirit. "The religion", he tells us,[2] "the cause of which I have proposed to assert, I regard as the flower and crowning blossom of the plant, formed of whatever was most vital in root, stem, and leaf, by the gradual separation and deposition of whatever was earthly and crude." It is and does all this because "it unites in its purposes the desiderata of the speculative and the practical being: its acts,

[1] MS. C.

[2] MS. B II. He cancels the actual words, but retains the sense in the passage in which they occur.

including its events, are truths and objects of philosophic insight, and *vice versa* the truths in which it consists are to be considered as acts and manifestations of that being which is at once the power and the truth".

It is not therefore surprising that it is this aspect of his philosophy that has been the storm-centre of criticism, and has drawn the fire of rationalist and orthodox alike. By the one he has been accused of using sophistical distinctions to justify him in believing what is otherwise incredible; by the other of using methods of thought which were essentially pagan, and which ended in an irreligious Pantheism. For the same reason it is from this side more than from any other that his opinions have attracted ardent defenders in the school of Broad Church theologians, of which by general consent he was the founder, and that more justice has been done to them by recent writers.[1] These writers have, however, approached their subject, as was natural, from the side of Christian theology and Biblical criticism rather than from that of his general philosophical principles. For the purposes of this Study Coleridge's relation to Christianity is secondary. What we are concerned with is primarily his general interpretation of the meaning of religion, what beliefs it seemed to him to involve, as to the nature of God and the destiny of the human soul, how far it seemed to him possible to justify these beliefs to the speculative reason, finally, and only as a corollary,

[1] Specially deserving mention are, Tulloch, Pfleiderer, Vernon Storr.

the place he assigned to the Christian religion and the theology that has come to be bound up with it.

2. The Meaning of Religion

What drove Coleridge from Unitarian Deism to Spinoza's "intellectual love of God", thence to Schelling's "intellectual vision" of Him, and forward from that again, was the failure of one and all to satisfy the demand of the heart for fellowship with God. He was himself a great, and I believe a faithful friend, and he craved friendship and faithfulness in the Source of the being of all things. Even Kant was of little help to him here. The poet in him was repelled by what seemed to him the Stoical note in a philosophy of religion that left no place for the affections; still more by its conception of God as merely the guarantor of the coincidence between virtue and happiness. He would have echoed Cook Wilson's saying, "We don't want merely inferred friends: can we possibly be satisfied with an inferred God?" What his heart craved, and what to him was the essence of religion, was Communion with God of which prayer was the medium.

There had been a time when in the strength of youth he could write of God as one

> " Of whose all-seeing eye
> Aught to demand were impotence of mind",

and still another, at which, in more miraculous verse, he could define prayer in terms of human

love to "all things both great and small". But his own bitter experience of life seemed to have taught him that more was required, and that the due function of prayer was to be a refuge from the weakness and limitations of the finite will. "It is a sore evil", he writes,[1] "to be and not in God—but it is a still more dreadful evil and misery to will to be other than God." Prayer he now defines as "the mediator or rather the effort to connect the misery of the self with the blessedness of God".[2] But the same experience had also taught him that prayer must be more than mere aspiration after union with God. It necessarily and inevitably took the form of petition, involving the cancellation of the incidents of time.[3] "What a deathly *praeteritum perfectum*", he exclaims,[4] "would the denial of prayer petrify the universe into." There was no subject in his later years on which he expressed himself to his friends with greater emphasis than on his conviction that the act of prayer was the very highest energy of which the human heart was capable, and that to believe vividly that God would listen and do the thing He pleaseth thereupon was

[1] *To Charles Lamb*. Quoted in this connection by De Quincey, article *Tait's Magazine*, September 1834. See *Table Talk*, etc., *ed. cit.*, p. 80, n. 2.

[2] MS. C, p. 143.

[3] In matters spiritual at least he would have no sympathy with Omar Khayyám's

> "The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
> Moves on: nor all your Piety nor wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
> Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

the last and greatest achievement of the Christian's warfare upon earth.[1]

It was in conformity with this conviction that the main problems of the philosophy of religion shaped themselves in his mind as the possibility of justifying to the reason the belief in existence of God as more than an impersonal Absolute, in His power of transcending the natural order of cause and effect, in the destiny of the individual as capable of showing His eternity, finally and as belonging more specifically to the Christian religion the belief in the reality of sin and redemption. On all of these Kant had denied the possibility of speculative proof. These beliefs might be open to faith, but not to sight. Coleridge so far agreed that an act of faith was involved in them all, but he held that, if the object of this faith could not be *proved* to reason, it could be shown not only not to be contrary to reason as involving an inherent contradiction, but to be only another word for reason, when taken in a sense that included the practical with the speculative exercise of the faculty. It was this view of faith as the synthesis of reason and the individual will that he had expounded in the *Essay on Faith*.[2] "By virtue of the latter (the

[1] *Table Talk*, etc., *loc. cit.*

[2] *Literary Remains*, vol. iv. p. 438. Cp. the passage prefixed to the *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, by the editor. Even in so purely an intellectual exercise as in working out an algebraic equation, he was prepared to note an element of faith when the algebraist "places his signs, letters, and cyphers, his + and − and √, etc., in their due places, drawing out the thread of its calculus, now emerging into light and now hidden in the cylinders of the machine". MS. H, 143.

will) faith must be an energy, and, inasmuch as it relates to the whole moral man, must be exerted in each and all of his constituents; it must be a total not a partial, a continuous not a desultory energy. And by virtue of the former, that is reason, faith must be a light, a form of knowing, a beholding of the truth." This is well said, but the truth had to be vindicated against the difficulties to which Kant had succumbed, the conflict, namely, between the judgments of the understanding and those to which faith prompted. Could it be shown that though all appearances as judged by sense and understanding were against such a faith yet reality might be with it? Coleridge thought that it could, and his later manuscript writings, incomplete as they are, bear witness to the earnestness with which he wrestled with these problems to the end.

3. The Idea of God

It was, as we have seen, an essential part of Coleridge's metaphysics that the idea of a supreme reality was not anything that could be arrived at through the senses or by the ordinary processes of logical reasoning. Conviction could come only through realizing it as the common ground which is assumed in all our several knowledges. However we may separate between their several objects, (body and form, matter and life, subject and object), we assume that these all co-inhere in one supreme reality. As the basis therefore of all science, it is

itself the subject of none. It is the same, substituting religious for scientific experience, with the idea of God. "I look round in vain", he writes,[1] "to discover a vacant place for a science, the result of which is to be the knowledge and ascertainment of God, i.e. of the reality and existence of the Supreme Being in the absence or rejection of the idea as the Datum, and the result anticipated and precontained in the premise." It is for this reason that we can discount in advance all "proofs" of the existence of God founded on either the direct intimations of the senses, or on reasonings from them, and the theologies that make their appeal to them. But the opportunity of illustrating his own general thesis by a review of the most important of these was not one that was likely to be lost by Coleridge, and the second of the two long chapters (unfortunately incomplete) of the Huntington manuscript is devoted to characteristic criticisms of them.

Starting from theories founded on intuition,[2] he takes as his first example the view that we know God in the same way as we behold mathematical figures — the point, line, circle, etc., of pure geometry. It seems odd that he mentions this as a mere possibility, and not as a theory that had anywhere been actually adopted, seeing that it is

[1] MS. H, p. 227.

[2] This may account for the absence of any allusion to Descartes's, *a priori* argument from the idea of God as the all-perfect Being, and therefore as including existence. Long ago, in *Blackwood's Magazine* of October 1821, he had rejected this on the ground that "existence is no idea but a fact, no property of a thing but its reality itself".

just to such illustrations that his own Platonizing English predecessors, notably John Norris, had constantly appealed as samples of the Ideas which were not merely in God, but which were the very mind of God. Yet the fact that it was so only adds additional interest to his criticism, as indicating the point at which, under Kantian influence, he parted company with them. The view is rejected on the ground that mathematical figures and numbers are only entitled objects in the sense that they may be anticipated in all men at all times, but that otherwise they have their sole "subsistence" in the mind or sentient faculty. It thus starts from a contradiction. Asking for that which is the ground of all reality, including the reality of the mind, and of that which is out of the mind, we are referred to one branch of the common stem as though it were the explanation of the whole. Modern Realism is not likely to accept Coleridge's characterization of mathematical objects as purely mental, and has adopted his term "subsistence" for the express purpose of indicating their essential objectivity, but he is undoubtedly right in rejecting any theory that would claim absolute existence and validity for ideas based in the end on the "sentient faculty", and consisting of abstractions from the data of sense.

Of greater historical importance, as the basis of one of the great religions of the world, is the doctrine that God is everywhere revealed to sense: "*Jupiter est quodcunque vides.*" The study of Eastern religions was still in its infancy in Coleridge's time.

It is all the more interesting to find him quoting the Bhagavad Gita as a book that "walks like the ghost of a departed world", and endeavouring to enter sympathetically into the state of mind of those of his contemporaries who had come under the spell of Brahminism.[1] As for himself, he had long outgrown the homage he had paid on his first presentation to these foreign potentates. His poetic sense was repelled by images which seemed to him the result of the combination of "mean thoughts and huge things", and he refused to find anything "Miltonic" even in the best of them. Milton would have been the last to confuse bigness with greatness. From the theological side, so far from offering the basis of a monotheistic religion, Brahminism was "in fact Atheism in the form of Polytheism". From the side finally of morality, to Coleridge the surest test in the end of theoretic validity, it offered an ethics in many respects worthy only of a Mexican Priesthood. Life gets bare recognition, while of Love, without which as the source Life has no religious bearing nor any intelligible genesis, there is no word.

Coming to the illustration of the impossibility of arriving at the idea of God by way of inference from sensory data, he gives the first place to the argument from Design. While recognizing its impressiveness, the ground on which he rejects it is not that which has been common since the time of Hume, its failure to prove more at best than the existence of a Deity limited, like a carpenter, by

[1] He mentions particularly "The late truly admirable Sir W. Jones". See Appendix C, below.

his materials. This would have been valid against the idea of an omnipotent, not necessarily against that of a personal and loving Creator. His objection struck deeper, and was nearer to modern ways of thinking in attempting to show that the argument by interpreting nature's adaptations as necessarily implying intelligence in the creative force assumes what it pretends to deduce. It reads the idea into the phenomena instead of deriving it from them.

Coleridge admits that the disproof of these arguments is in itself far from establishing the impossibility of any argument whatsoever. This can only be done by showing that, as in the case of Ideas in general, the Idea of God is something that cannot, in Locke's phrase, be "conveyed into the mind" at all. It can only be awakened and brought into distinct consciousness by the appropriate experience. He even differs from Kant in holding that though he was right in denying positive demonstrative force to the a *posteriori* arguments, we must admit that there are "inducements of such strength that a man would deserve to be deemed mad who rejected them".[1] All that he is here and elsewhere interested in showing is that the chief function of philosophy is to indicate the particular kind of experience that is fitted to awaken the idea and to remove particular obstacles to its acceptance by the reason. As the exposition we have been here following ends abruptly at the

[1] Note on Nikolais' Philosophy in the Ottery St. Mary's *Marginalia*. Cp. what he says on arguments for the immorality of the soul, p. 234 below.

point where we are led to expect some positive statements on these subjects, we are left to gather what we can upon them from kindred passages elsewhere. Leaving for the moment the former as belonging rather to the psychology than to the philosophy of religion in the strict sense, we find him in some of these keenly conscious of the difficulty of justifying to the speculative reason both those attributes in Deity which are necessary that the belief in the Absolute Will should be converted into belief in a personal God with sovereignty over the temporal order of nature, and those in man which are required for the true interpretation of his moral life as rooted in the supra-natural.

4. The Personal Being of God

In his general metaphysical theory Coleridge had tried to vindicate the priority of Will to Being in the Absolute. But personality offered further difficulty, which he was not content to solve merely as a deduction from the general position, and submits to examination in the chapter entitled "Personal and Impersonal Reason" in the portion of his *Magnum Opus* quoted above as MS. B. His solution of it has particular interest, seeing that it anticipates that which is put forward by the best-informed philosophical theists in the present day.[1]

He traces the difficulty to the habit of associating personality in ourselves with limitation and ex-

[1] E.g. by Clement C. J. Webb, in *God and Personality*, and by J. E. Turner, in *Personality and Reality*.

clusiveness. This, he holds, is founded in a mistake. Limitation cannot be its essence. Were it so, we should have to hold that "the wiser a man became, the greater (that is) his power of self-determination, with so much less propriety can he be spoken of as a person; and *vice versa* the more exclusive the limits, and the smaller the sphere enclosed—in fact the less Will he possessed—the more a person; till at length his personality would be at its maximum when he bordered on the mere animal or the idiot, when, according to all use of language, he ceased to be a person at all". The truth, on the contrary, is that, with the increase of these limitations, the personality diminishes, though it is not permitted in a responsible will ever utterly to vanish. A man may become a fiend, but hardly a brute. In reality personality becomes more perfect in proportion as a man rises above the negations and privations by which the finite is differentiated from the Absolute, the human will from the divine, man from God.

Approaching the problem from this side, we can see that "to hesitate to call God a person is like hesitating to speak of the root which is antecedent to stem and branches, lest we should be supposed to be speaking of it to the exclusion of them, and to thus cast back an eclipsing shadow of the indigent particulars on the all-sufficient basis of their common being and the originating cause of their particular existence". Yet there must remain a difference between what we know as personality in man and the same attribute in God, as including while at the same time attaining a higher grade

of perfection. To meet this justifiable scruple he proposes to use the term "Personeity" to indicate what is at once personality and more than personality. God, as the modern theist would say, may be super-personal, but this must include the best we understand by personal. It is on this ground that to the idea of the Absolute as Will Coleridge feels himself justified in adding as the "second idea" that of "personal being, having the *causa sui*, or ground and principle of its being, in its own inexhaustible causative might".

In the interpretation he here gives of the meaning of personality as a circumference continually expanding through sympathy and understanding, rather than as an exclusive centre of self-feeling, and consequently of the meaning of individuality and uniqueness as something to be won, and therefore, in the end, as an element subordinate to union with the Whole and undividedness from it, he anticipates the best that later idealism had to say on the subject. So far as I know, it is the first clear statement in English philosophy of this point of view, and has the advantage of carrying us beyond the ambiguities that still infect voluntaristic schemes in our own time.[1] Its application to the life of the Absolute is a more difficult matter. Granted that personality is an ideal that progressive spirits are ever realizing in fuller degree, yet it lives in the tension between the Self and an Other beyond the self. Coleridge recognized the element of Otherness, or as he called it "Altereity" in the Infinite, but

[1] Even Royce, as I try elsewhere to indicate, is not free from them.

there is this difference, that to finite personality the Other comes as something in a real sense beyond itself, while in the Infinite it is a self-made distinction. Yet if Theism as commonly held is to be justified, it must be along the lines that Coleridge was the first to lay down.[1]

5. God as Special Providence

Even greater than the difficulty of attributing personality to the absolute Being is that of harmonizing the scientific view of the order of the world, both physical and moral, as determined by undeviating law, backed as this is by the philosophical view of God as the supreme Reason underlying that law, with the belief in Him as the hearer and answerer of prayer—a belief which, as Coleridge admitted, "seemed to rest only in the individual's secret persuasion", and to require us to accept "faith as the main evidence of the truth of the faith". For his most careful statement of the difficulty and his method of meeting it, we have, I believe, to go to the long entry in his philosophical diary, MS. C, founded on his often-repeated definition of Faith as the Fidelity of the personal will in each of us to the *moral* reason—"reason in the form of conscience, conscience in the light of reason".

The question as here put is how far this faith requires the support of "belief", in the ordinary

[1] For an interesting up-to-date discussion of the above difficulty, see Hilda D. Oakley's *Study in the Philosophy of Personality*, p. 174 foll.

sense of the word. His answer is that faith, so defined, does not necessarily imply belief. It may exist without it, and, when a strong sense of the moral issue at stake, as in Kant's case, overbears the evidence of ordinary experience, even in contradiction to it. But he is not himself content to leave the matter there, and he goes on in terms of his own metaphysical conclusions to conceive of one "who has re-examined the premises of his reason, and, by reference to his own act of self-affirmation, discovers that the assumption that reason and truth are the absolutely first is a purely arbitrary one: that there must be something before it as the self-subsistent ground of all being, and that this can only be conceived as Will and Good; affirming itself in an eternal act, the source of its own and all other reality as the Other of its own Identity, Giver therefore of Life, i.e. of Individuality, as well as Supreme Reason; uniting Law and Dispensation, as universal gravity does not exclude, but includes, specific gravities; a Spirit not only for all, but for each and every". Emancipated from the power of the understanding, even able to use it, in spite of its uncertainty, as an ally, such a man may possess a faith which is identical with his pure act of will, submitting itself to reason not merely as universal, but as the representative of a holy Will—a faith therefore *with* belief, "but with a belief that derives its origin and stability wholly from the antecedent faith".

We can see in this passage, better perhaps than anywhere else, Coleridge's heroic determination

to get beyond the merely "permissive" faith in God as a watchful Presence of the Kantian philosophy; and if prayer in the sense of petition for something for which the physical and moral constitution of the world, as we ordinarily know it, makes no provision, is to be vindicated, we may agree that it must be along some such lines as he here indicates. His argument at least possesses the advantage over that of ordinary Pragmatism that it seeks to reconcile the control of events by the "will to believe" with the existence of an eternal reality, with which our wills, if they are to attain any true individuality, have in the end to identify themselves.

Yet we may ask whether, in spite of his own deeper insight, he does not still remain too much in bondage to the Kantian doctrine of sensory experience as entirely dominated by mechanical conceptions, and of the spiritual as something brought in from some supersensual and supernatural region.[1] If the Whole is spiritual, and therefore in the end providential, it is not by having things altered from without that we have to seek the goal of union with Its spirit, but by accepting them, whether in the natural or the moral world, just as they are and turning them to the ends of the spirit. Even as man's material progress is wrought not by magic but by the ministry of physical nature, so his moral and religious progress is wrought by the ministry of psychical nature. If prayer, as Coleridge held it to be, is the effort to

[1] He objects himself to identifying the supernatural with the miraculous *Aids*, etc., Aphorism CVIII, 1.

live in the spirit of the Whole, it attains its highest level not in the assertion of our will, as in petition, but in the acceptance of God's will as including ends beyond the particular and the present, in the words "not as I will, but as Thou wilt".

6. Immortality of the Soul [1]

Belief in the soul's immortal destiny was to Coleridge, as to his Platonic predecessors in England, not only an essential part of religion, but the foundation of a rational ethics. In the marginal note on Kant's view, already referred to,[2] he protests against the attempt to separate ethics from it. "I cannot conceive", he writes, "a supreme moral Intelligence unless I believe in my own immortality, for (in that case) I must believe in a whole system of apparent means to an end which has no existence. Give up this, and virtue wants all reason. I can readily conceive that I have it in my nature to die a martyr, knowing that annihilation followed death, if it were possible to believe that all other human beings were immortal and to be benefited by it—but (not for [3]) any benefit that could affect only a set of transitory animals. Boldly should I say: O Nature! I would rather not have been; let that which is to come so soon, come now, for what is all the intermediate space, but sense and utter worthlessness?"

[1] The student of Coleridge's poetry will recall the poem on *Human Life, on the Denial of Immortality*.

[2] P. 154.

[3] Writing indecipherable. I give what seems the obvious meaning.

We may wonder at the vigour of this protest in one who knew so well on occasion how to assert the presence of the eternal in, as well as beyond, the temporal. Yet we should be wrong if we took it as merely a reflection of orthodox opinion, or of the stock arguments in support of immortality. In a well-known passage [1] he comments at length on Jeremy Taylor's argument founded on the necessity to believe in "*Another* state of things where Justice shall rule and Virtue find her own portion". This is too like Kant's argument to find favour in Coleridge's eyes, and here as elsewhere the appeal, though not explicitly, is from Kant to Plato. What is important is not the disproportion between moral worth and worldly prosperity, but the contradiction in human nature itself: the presence in it of mind and will, which ally themselves not with what is transient and essentially unsatisfying in the objects of sense and appetite, but with whatever has the character of permanence amid continual flux—"unchanging like a rainbow in a fast-flying shower, e.g. beauty, order, harmony, law"—things that are all "*congenera* of mind, without which they would not only exist in vain, as pictures for moles, but actually not *exist* at all". Finally there is the universal presentiment, even preassurance, of a life beyond, and the unlikelihood that, while "in every other ingrafted word of promise Nature is found true to her word", her first lie should be to her noblest creature.

He makes no claim that these arguments amount

[1] *Aids*, etc., Aphorism CXXIII.

to the proof of what, as an Idea, is undemonstrable. They are only a make-weight in a balance where there is nothing in the other scale; "no facts in proof of the contrary that would not prove equally the dissolution or incapacity of the musician on the fracture of his instrument or its strings".[1] In harmony with this interpretation is the form which his appeal to the authority of St. Paul takes at the end of the passage. It is not, as we might otherwise have expected, to the argumentation of I Corinthians, chap. xv, that we are referred, but to the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews, where the whole question is raised to a higher level by the change of emphasis from physical to spiritual death. The salvation which Christianity offers, we are reminded, is not from temporal death or the penalties and afflictions of the present life, "but from the condemnation of the Law". The soul's question to which the Gospel gives the answer is not whether there is a judgment to come, but where may grace and redemption be found. "Not therefore *that* there is a life to come and a future state, but *what* each individual soul may hope for itself therein; and on what grounds; and that this state has been rendered an object of aspiration and fervent desire, and a source of thanksgiving and

[1] In a note on Tennemann's strictures on Socrates's argument in the *Phaedo* as "beneath a man of sound understanding" (*History of Philosophy*, vol. ii. pp. 76–8), he repeats the above in another form, adding, "surely if these taken collectively be beneath a sensible man's notice, it would be hard to say what could deserve it. But Tennemann saw everything through the spectacles of Kant, or rather Kantianism".

exceeding great joy . . . *these* are the *peculiar* and distinguishing fundamentals of the Christian Faith."

Thus spiritualized, the argument in his hands turns from one for the survival of the soul in another life, into one for its salvation in this life by rising through grace to communion with God. From this point of view he might even have been prepared to agree with the modern protest that "an over-anxious desire to prove the immortality of the soul is not by any means an evidence of a religious temper. Indeed, the belief in immortality may easily become an unhealthy occupation with a future salvation which prevents us from seeking for salvation for mankind here—unless it be that natural spring of confidence in its own supreme reality, that unbelief in death, which seems to be a necessary characteristic and concomitant of true spiritual life."[1] However this may be, it is in its assertion of the reality of moral evil and the means of salvation from it that he finds at once the power of the Christian religion and the most difficult problem that the philosophy of religion has to face.

7. Nature and Origin of Evil

As religion was the highest exercise of the human spirit, Christianity, Coleridge held, was the highest exercise of religion; and its excellence consisted in its power to rouse in us the sense of the debasement

[1] E. Caird, in *Evolution of Religion*, vol. iii. p. 243.

of "slavery to the outward senses", and at the same time "to awaken the mind to the true criteria of reality, viz. Permanence, Power, Will manifested in Act, and truth operating as Life".[1] It was the conviction of this that made what he calls "the two great moments of the Christian religion", original sin and redemption, so important to him: "*that* the ground, this the superstructure of our faith".

It is not perhaps surprising that, taking this form, his Christian apologetics should more than anything else in his writings have given rise to the idea that, when he came to religion, Coleridge was prepared to abandon the appeal to philosophy. Sufficient has already been said to show how impossible it was for a mind like his to accept any doctrine in an uncriticized and unrationalized form. In reality the vividness with which he seemed to realize the facts in his own experience, and the importance he attached to them, were additional reasons for the attempt to translate them into philosophical language. He had no hope that they could be made completely intelligible to the understanding. They were in the end what he called mysteries. Yet, if they could be shown to be implied in a given experiential fact, and to be themselves possible as free from contradiction, this was all the justification that was required.

In the form of the doctrine of "original sin" he had discussed the question of the reality of evil in *Aids to Reflection*, but had there been content,

[1] *Aids*, etc., Conclusion, 18.

after rejecting "the monstrous fiction of hereditary sin", to deduce it from the idea of the will itself. Given a will which is an "original", as above and contrasted with the chain of events we call Nature, there is given along with it the possibility of submitting itself to that which is behind it, instead of to its own law, and of thus becoming subject to foreign domination. Such subjection is what we know as original Sin, namely, evil which has an origin, not in Adam, but in every man, for "it belongs to the very essence of the doctrine that in respect to original sin (not Adam only but) every man is the adequate representative of *all* men".[1] Whether or not he himself recognized at this time the deeper difficulty involved in his own metaphysical theory of the Absolute as primarily and essentially Will, by the time he came to dictate the chapter in his *Opus Maximum*, entitled *On the Divine Ideas*, the whole problem had deepened, and he there set himself to deal with it as the main crux of any philosophy which, like his own, was founded on the idea of an absolute and infinite reality.

The existence of evil seems to imply the possibility of a "separated finite", of that which "in some sense or other is, yet is not God, nor one with God", and thus to create a "chasm" for who

[1] *Aids*, etc., Aphorism CIXc. 24, an interpretation of the "philosophical myth" of Genesis, which J. H. Green develops in an interesting way (see appendix to *Spiritual Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 336 foll.). Whether it would have satisfied the orthodoxy of his own or later times may be doubted. Dr. John Tulloch mentions it (*Movements of Religious Thought in Britain in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 21) without commenting on the sophism which equates "original" with "having an origin".

can to overbridge? We might attempt to get over the difficulty by defining the finite as the mere negation of the Infinite. But it is not Nature's way to produce living shapes except from forms which are positive powers. Only in lifeless things, the arrow in the air or the fragment rent from the rock, do we have shapes that may be said to be the product of negation. Even if we admitted that the finite were a mere negation, the question of its possibility would return upon us, for just in this separation we should have the evil we set out to explain. This is the knot that has been cut rather than untied by schemes that give us either a world without God or a world that is God. On the other hand, all the great and stirring epochs in the history of Western theology have coincided with the assertion of God as absolute Will, the cause of itself and of everything else. It is further altogether to Coleridge's credit that he will have nothing to do with any attempt to solve the problem on the lines of the modern theory of God as a "Creator of creators", and as thus limited by their freedom. He has no use for a limited Godhead. God must be all in all or He is nothing. Whatever may be the value of his own attempt at a solution, it has the merit of facing the question in its ultimate and most difficult form.[1]

It starts from the view which "the oldest sages of all nations have sought to express" in the doctrine of the Divine Ideas, not as knowledge or perception as distinguished from the thing known, but as a

[1] On this and on the principle of solution, see p. 278 below.

realizing knowledge, a knowledge causative of its own reality, a light which knows as it is known (φῶς νοερὸν καὶ νοητόν), and therefore containing the universal and the particular, the potential and the actual, in one indivisible whole so that neither can have any true being apart from the other. From this it follows that if there is anything which we must conceive of as possessing the possibility of affirming the particular as such, this is equivalent to assigning to it the possibility of so far ceasing to be real. But this is just what we must conceive the finite to possess if it is to be a will. It is true that all willing means *self*-realization and, so far as it does so, there is a universal embodied in the particular act. But in order that it may be a *willed* act there must have been the possibility of willing this universal under the control of something foreign to it as it is in its truth: as Coleridge puts it, "under the predominance of the particular", instead of willing the particular "solely as the glory and representation of the plenitude of the universal". So long as this remains a mere possibility it is compatible with the reality of God, but in the will to actualize the possibility there is a self affirmed which is not God, and it is this that makes the difficulty—a difficulty, however, of which Coleridge thought he had the solution in the logical principle which was the foundation of his whole philosophy.

Hold by the old dichotomous logic which divides the world into actual and potential, and takes this as equivalent to real and unreal, and the problem of evil is insoluble. On the other hand, take these

opposites as the two poles of one reality, and we have the key in our hands. We can see that a will which wills what is merely actual cuts itself off from its root in reality, while at the same time willing to be real—wills in fact to be and not to be in the same act. This truly is a self-contradiction, but it is one which gives the solution and not a new problem, for to be in essential contradiction with itself is precisely the state which we mean by evil. To be really actual the finite must will its subsistence in God: what it does in doing evil is to "will itself to be actual under impossible conditions, a strange and appropriate contradiction".

Concluding the long argument, here condensed, Coleridge claims for it in the first place that it enables us to avoid the mystic's conception of "the Abyss", that is of a not-Good, which is yet not evil, before the evolution of Good, a conception which he finds no better than that of chaos; in the second place that it vindicates the reality of distinct beings in the plenitude of the divine mind, whose essence is will, and whose actuality consists in their being one with God; and finally that it proves the possibility of a fall from this state, "a ceasing to be eternal and a transition into the temporal" by willing their actuality in themselves and not in God.

It was this last that he had set out to prove. It is all that philosophy can be called upon to prove. That evil actually exists is a proposition that requires no proof. It is part of the world as we

know it. To realize this we have only to reflect what kind of a world that would be from which all conception of guilt is eliminated, in which we have no other distinction of value than pleasure and pain, no evils but calamities, and for a God either a demoniacal Will or no Will at all, but a mere fate, a *deus multitudo* with no higher unity than a heap of corn or a pillar of sand, the architecture of a whirlwind.[1] On the other hand, accept the patent fact of evil, with the proof of its possibility which flows from the principle on which our whole system is built, and we can see that Will is higher than Power, and that while we can think of power apart from intelligence and love, it is impossible so to think of will.

With this finally we have the answer to the question of the origin of evil. We see that it cannot be anything that is begotten of God, for in that case it would be co-eternal and co-substantial with Him. It is in fact something to which the distinction between cause and effect made by the "dividing understanding" does not apply, merging as it does in the deeper one of essence and form: something therefore which may be "represented in a fearful sense, as *αὐτομήτηρ αὐτούσιος*".

Looking back on the argument of this remarkable chapter of Coleridgean philosophy, we should perhaps be right in saying that there are few things of equal power in the literature of Theism. It extorts from us something of the admiration which Coleridge himself felt for the equally daring logic

[1] MS. H, p. 107.

of Plotinus.[1] We should further perhaps be right in granting that, if we start from the identification of God with the Absolute, the object of religious consciousness with that of the speculative reason, it is by some such argument that the reality of moral evil must be vindicated. It is certainly no objection to it that potential and actual seem to change places, and that *that* alone is admitted to be actual, in which the potential of the will, as one with God, is realized. We are familiar in modern Realism with views that go near to equating potentiality with reality.[2] Where it gives us pause is the assumption, which underlies it, that the problem of evil is solved by the proof of the possibility of *moral* guilt. It may be true that to the eye of faith all physical evils have their place in the divine plan, and that the tower of Siloam, and all that it symbolizes, has some deep moral significance.[3] But simply to assume this, as Coleridge seems to do throughout, is to leave what to some is the main stumbling-block in theistic schemes untouched.

Going deeper and returning to the central principle of the whole, it is legitimate to ask whether the difficulty of moral evil is not one which is raised rather than solved by the identification of the supreme reality with Will. There is nothing in which Coleridge strikes more firmly the note of

[1] See above, p. 106.

[2] E.g. in Professor A. N. Whitehead's *Process and Reality*.

[3] "Moral evil", we are told, "is the *sting* of calamity, an evil from which all else that is or can be *called* evil derives its evilness." MS. *cit.*, p. 107.

all true idealism than in his insistence that the clue to what is ultimately real is to be found in the analogy of "the highest intuitions or ideas in our own minds".[1] But if this is so, it is natural to ask whether the appeal to religious consciousness at its highest does not suggest a level of experience at which will no longer survives as will, and sin is done away with in the peace of God. Perhaps, if we had as full a treatment of Redemption, as we here have of Sin, from the point of view of Coleridge's more developed thought, we might have found that he was prepared to meet this difficulty. As it is, we have to be content with what we find upon this subject, and upon his view of the Christianity which is specifically equated with it,[2] in his earlier published works.

8. Doctrine of Redemption

As sin is the enslavement of the will by the rejection of its own law in favour of mere natural inclination, redemption is the resumption of the law into the will and its consequent restoration to perfect freedom.[3] "Whenever by self-subjection to this universal light (the light of conscience) the will of the individual, the *particular* will, has become a will of reason, the man is regenerate, and reason is then the spirit of the regenerated man, whereby the

[1] MS. *cit.*, p. 37.

[2] "Christianity and redemption", he writes (*Aids*, etc., Aphorism CXVIc, 3), "are equivalent terms".

[3] *Aids*, etc., Aphorism CXIVc, 3, and XCVIIc.

person is capable of a quickening intercommunion with the Divine Spirit." The mystery of redemption just consists in the fact that this has become possible for us. "And so it is written 'The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickening spirit'." From what he had already said of the first Adam as the representative of all men,[1] we might have expected him to go on to say the same of the last Adam as the head of a race renewed in the spirit of their minds, all the more as he takes this to be the meaning of St. Paul's use of "the Word, on which he founds his whole reasoning",[2] and credits St. John with identifying redemption "in *kind* with a fact of hourly occurrence, expressing it by a familiar fact, the same in *kind* with that intended, though of a far lower *dignity*"—and therefore no less a mystery.[3]

That he stops short of this is doubtless partly owing to his method in this book, which sometimes leaves us in doubt whether he is giving the opinions of others or stating his own, but also and much more to the ambiguity in his use of such words as "revelation" and "miracle", which though constantly recurring are never clearly defined. But that this is his real meaning we cannot doubt from what we hear elsewhere both from himself and others of his view of what is essential in the teaching of Christianity. "Miracles", he held, "are superero-

[1] See above, p. 238. [2] *Op. cit.*, Aphorism CXIVc.
[3] Aphorism CXVIIIc, 4 and cp. CXII. 2, where the mystery is explained as consisting in the fact that "The will, like the life in every act and product, supposes itself a past always present, a present that evermore resolves itself into a past".

gatory. The law of God and the great principles of the Christian religion would have been the same had Christ never assumed humanity."[1] Dealing with the same subject, his devoted disciple, J. H. Green, who is not likely to have misrepresented him in anything so fundamental, draws the parallel between Adam as "the name intended to signify primaeval man collectively", and Christ as "the Almighty Power of Goodness", his spirit "the eternal Humanity working in us", the redemptive process only another name for "all the works of creation", and therefore independent of all *profession* of Christianity.[2]

In view of these utterances, we must allow Coleridge all the credit, which Broad Church writers claim for him, of an interpretation of the Christian religion equally removed from the materialism, which left no place for it at all, and the Evangelicism, to which it was something brought in from without, and superimposed by miraculous revelation upon recalcitrant human nature. To him Christianity thus interpreted was the highest achievement of religion, itself the blossom and flower of the spirit—a position from which there is no going back for anyone who claims a future for it in the atmosphere of modern thought.

It would have been well, perhaps, if he had been content with this reading of its teaching. We might

[1] Allsop's *Letters, Conversations and Recollections*, p. 47.

[2] *Spiritual Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 386 foll. To the same effect is Green's reference to the facts of Gospel history as admissible only "so far as they are consistent with the *Idea of the revelation of a spiritual order of events belonging to the spiritual world*", *ibid.*, p. 326 (his own italics).

have found in it an anticipation of the view made familiar to us in the leaders of the idealistic movement in our time.[1] He was himself aware of the danger that threatened the simplicity of the Gospel from preoccupation with metaphysical questions. "I am persuaded", he wrote,[2] "that the vehement widespread and long-continued Arian controversy had the effect, among other injurious effects, of fixing the mind and the heart of the Church too exclusively on the metaphysical prolegomena of the Christian religion, even to the obscuration of the Son of Man in the co-eternal Son of God. . . Too constant and partial occupation of the thoughts with the Trinity and the eternal divinity of the Word eclipses . . the mild orb of our Lord's humanity which rose with healing in its rays." As a speculative doctrine, the essence of Christianity, he held, was that "it denies the true objectivity of corporal things". For the rest, "Christianity is a growth, a becoming, a progression. . . History, therefore, and history under the form of moral freedom, is that alone in which the Idea of Christianity can be realized."[3]

[1] E.g. in T. H. Green's *Works*, iii. p. 230 foll., and E. Caird's *Lay Sermons and Addresses*.

[2] MS. C, p. 112.

[3] *Ibid.*, earlier entry. Cp. *Confessions*, etc., Letter vi., where the proof of the divine origin of Christianity is to be found, not in the Scriptures, but in the "progressive and still continuing fulfilment of the assurance of a few fishermen that both their own religion and the religion of their conquerors should be superseded by the faith of a man recently and ignominiously executed"—a proof that would have held "even though, as Irenaeus said, they had left no Scriptures behind them".

But he was too deeply involved in the "metaphysical prolegomena" and the Laocoon-like coils of Trinitarian theology to be content with the experiential fruits of Christianity. The Neo-Platonism of his great English predecessors, and the exaggerated sense of his own mission as a renovator of the Christian religion, blown into a flame by the adulation of some of the more fanatical of his friends, combined to inspire him with the idea of adding to his general philosophy of religion a theosophy which should establish Christianity as "alone reflecting the character of religion, its doctrines truths,[1] its narratives facts, its effects worthy of its asserted Author". All that this enterprise was thought by him to involve we know from the scheme he sketches in MS. C [2] of a treatment of Humanity "in relation to the conservative and regenerative process", which should "practically be a history of civilization from the religious side".

Impossible to complete under any circumstances, and daily for himself and his contemporaries becoming more impossible with the advance of Biblical criticism even to attempt, this was destined to remain no more than a programme, and we need not further trouble ourselves with it here. But before leaving the subject, it is only doing justice to his saner thought upon it to note the precise point at

[1] For these, see *Aids*, etc., CIII (quoted from Leighton), *Confessions*, etc., Letter i, and the "Pentad of Operative Christianity" prefixed to that work.

[2] Printed at length, Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 3 foll., as the ground plan of "an unwritten Epic". See below, Appendix A.

which the Christian conception of redemption seemed to him to require and to lend itself to further philosophical interpretation.

Religion in general, as we have seen, rested with him on the idea of a Divine Providence acting on the individual soul through natural circumstances and the events of history, but ready to aid it in response to a right attitude of aspiration and expectation. To this Christianity added the idea of Grace and Redemption, conceived of as meeting the particular need to be saved from the misery incident to "fallen" or (as he would have been ready to say) "rising" humanity. The problem with him was not to *explain* Providence and Grace, but to show how, on the analogy of ordinary experience, and on the assumption of the difference between the apparent and the real man, they were rationally possible. It was for this reason impossible for him to accept Kant's denial of the action of outward influences upon the will. While admitting that regeneration through an act and energy of diseased human nature, aided and fostered by a supernatural one, is in the end a mystery, he finds analogies to it [1] "in the undoubted influence of example, of education, in short of all the administrants and auxiliaries of the Will. The will may be acted on not only by ourselves (through the cultivation of habits), but by the will of others, nay even by nature, by the breeze, the sunshine, by the tender life and freshness of the sensation of

[1] Note on p. 297 of Kant's *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloszen Vernunft.*

convalescence, by shocks of sickness." After referring to George Herbert's poem *The Sonne*,[1] he goes on (tentatively enough), "Why not then an influence of influences from the Sun of God, with the Spirit of God acting directly on the *homo noumenon*, as well as through the *homo phaenomenon*? This would make a just distinction between grace and redemption and providential aids: the direct action on the noumenon would be the grace—the call—the influence on the *noumenon* through the *homo phaenomenon* by the prearrangement of outward or bodily circumstances would be, as they are commonly called in pious language, providences. Finally, on such a view might not Christ be the World as revealed to human knowledge—a kind of common sensorium, the idea of the whole that modifies all our thoughts? And might not numerical difference be an exclusive property of phenomena so that he who puts on the likeness of Christ becomes Christ?"[2]

Speculation of this kind has gone out of fashion among philosophers, and even those who have inherited Coleridge's reverence for the Christian

[1] "How neatly do we give one onely name
To parents' issue and the sunne's bright starre.

. . . . .

For what Christ once in humblenesse began
We Him in glorie call the Sonne of Man."

[2] *Loc. cit.* He veils these speculations in Greek and Latin terms: *ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ* = *Κόσμος ἐπιστημάτικος Ἀνθρώπων*, sensorium quasi commune? Idea totalis cogitationum omnium modificatrix? They remind us of Blake's identification of Christ with the Imagination, from which perhaps it is not very remote.

tradition, might suspect the attempt to find its essence in a distinction between the real and the apparent man, which was designed to admit of miraculous incursions from another world.[1] If the Universe is spiritual, it must be spiritual through and through, and not in streaks and patches. The belief that miracle is necessary to unite material and spiritual is really a form of unbelief. But no philosopher who is prepared to admit uncovenanted factors in our lives, such as the gift of will itself, and the sense of the need of something from beyond ourselves, wherein salvation from its weakness may be found, can fail to sympathize with any genuine attempt to show how this is possible, and how the dead bones of old theological controversies may live again in real speculative problems.

9. The Origin of the Idea of God in the Soul

Be this as it may, it is probably with a sense of relief that some students of Coleridge's philosophy of religion will turn from speculations of this kind to what he has to say on the birth of religion in the soul, where, as always when it is a matter of psychology, he is at his best. He was profoundly convinced of the entire "naturalness of religion", in the sense in which it is advocated by idealistic writers at the present day,[2] and in a chapter

[1] Coleridge held that "Whatever is spiritual is *eo nomine* supernatural". "But", he went on to ask, "must it be always of necessity miraculous?" (*Confessions*, etc., Letter vi), where we should rather ask, "can it ever be miraculous?"

[2] See the recent book with this title by A. B. Brown and J. W. Harvey.

entitled "The Origin of the Idea of God",[1] he discusses the sources in human experience from which it springs.

He is prepared to find the beginnings of it in instinct; but this does not mean equating it with anything that is merely animal. All instincts are not alike; each kind of creature has its own; the instincts of man differ from those of the lower animals in being already pervaded by the reason which is the mark of humanity. In this sense they are "rational instincts—reason mutely prophesying of its own advent". But "rational" instincts might still mean, as they did in the current psychology, instincts directed to the preservation and well-being of the merely individual self. Needless to say, this was not Coleridge's meaning. The instinct that prophesies of religion, on the contrary, is the impulse to respond to something beyond the self, and this has its beginning in the outgoing of the child's heart to parents. "Why", he asks, "have men a faith in God? There is but one answer. The man and the man alone has a Father and a Mother. The first dawnings of (the infant's) humanity will break forth in the eye that connects the mother's face with the warmth of the mother's bosom. A thousand tender kisses excite a finer life in its lips, and their first language is imitated from the mother's smiles. Ere yet a conscious self exists the love begins, and the first love is love to an other. Beyond the beasts, yea and above the nature of which they are inmates, man possesses love and faith and the

[1] MS. B.

sense of the permanent", and this because he possesses an understanding differing, not solely by its greater extent from that of the ant or the dog, but by being "irradiated by a higher power, the power namely of seeking what it can nowhere behold, and finding that which itself has first transfused—the permanent, which in the endless flux of things can alone be known".

After showing how the bodily self by being "the image which is always present to the senses" tends, in individuals, peoples, and epochs, to usurp the place of the truly permanent, and to be the source of the corruption of religion by idolatry, ceremonialism, and magic, he goes on to insist that Nature gives no countenance to this, but draws us all the other way. "As soon as ever the heart of man is made tender by the presence of a love which has no self, by a joy in the protection of the helpless, which is at once impulse, motive and reward, so surely is it elevated to the Universal Parent." In a word, the birth of thought is also the birth of religion: "The first introduction to thought takes place in the transfer of person from the senses to the invisible. The reverence for the invisible, substantiated by the feeling of love, this, which is the essence and proper definition of religion, is the commencement of the intellectual life of humanity."

As compared with the immense literature that has grown up on the Psychology of Religion, the hints we have here and elsewhere in Coleridge may seem meagre enough. But as compared with the

still meagrer and misdirected accounts of the popular psychology of his time, they have the merit of seizing the essential point by connecting religion in its beginning with that which carries the soul beyond itself and connects it, through the affections, with a larger world. To find anything comparable to it we have to come to writers of our own time, who, like him, have recognized the place of mother-love in awakening the sense of an all-encompassing, though invisible goodness.[1]

Returning to Coleridge's religious philosophy as a whole we may, after what has been already said of it, sum up in a word what may be taken to be its main achievement. This was to combine the Platonic theory of the *world* as an expression of the Divine Ideas, of *reason* as their reflection in our minds, and of *religion* as the wrapt contemplation of them, so reflected, on which the early English Platonists had mainly dwelt, with a voluntaristic theory of being and of the knowledge of it, largely Kantian, finally with a psychology essentially his own. By shifting the emphasis from God as Being or substance to God as Will, he was able to vindicate the practical nature of religion, which was later to become the keynote of the treatment of it by British and American idealistic writers,[2] and to identify Faith with Fidelity to conscience and the indications of the Will of God upon earth as

[1] See, e.g., William Wallace's similar and not less eloquent account of the birth of reason and love, and therewith of soul, in the infant through "the mother's glance and smile and touch". *Lectures and Essays*, p. 114 foll.

[2] E.g. F. H. Bradley and Josiah Royce.

rationally interpreted, instead of with belief in any system of doctrine. If, under the influence of the prevailing orthodox atmosphere in which he lived, his own morbid experience, and his conviction that the only alternative was a soul-deadening pantheism, he sought to add to this a reconstruction of orthodox Christian dogma, it only showed that, like perhaps both his masters, Plato and Kant, he was unaware of the full extent of the revolution in men's minds for which his own thought, more than that of any other writer of his time and nation, was the preparation.

CONCLUSION

"The loftiest poet and the loftiest philosopher deal with the same subject-matter, the great problems of the world and human life, though one presents the symbolism and the other unravels the logical connection of the abstract conceptions."—LESLIE STEPHEN, "Coleridge", in *Hours in a Library*.

IT might seem a natural conclusion to a study like the above to trace the influence of Coleridge's thought in the technical philosophy of the following generation. I believe that, as compared with its influence in other fields, particularly that of Anglican theology, this as a matter of fact was insignificant. There was, indeed, an apparent exception in the work of Joseph Henry Green. But it was one of those exceptions which prove the rule. Green inherited Coleridge's philosophical manuscripts, if not his prophetic mantle, and thenceforth conceived it his mission to reduce to order the materials they contained for a complete philosophy. But he felt himself overburdened by the responsibility, and somewhat after the manner of his Master spent the most of the years that remained to him, until his death in 1863, in preparation for a task that he did not live to complete on the large-scale plan he had designed. What we have from his hand in the book *Spiritual Philosophy* was somewhat hastily put together when he realized how short the available time was likely to be. Even so, it did not see the light till 1865, by which time fresh impulses were coming from Germany, that seemed to put the results of the earlier movement out of date. It was for this, among other

reasons, that the book fell dead, and remains to us rather an echo of a bygone day than a uniting link filling the gap between Coleridge's death in 1834 and the writers of thirty years later.[1]

But Green was only one, and one of the lesser known of a generation of men, distinguished as few have been for intellectual interest and power to give expression to it, and, if there is little to record of Coleridge's direct philosophical influence over their thought, all the more may something seem to be required to account for this failure. "There are few middle-aged men of active intelligence at the present day", wrote H. D. Traill in the 'eighties,[2] "who can avoid a confession of having 'taken' Carlylism in their youth; but no mental constitutions not predisposed to it could ever have caught Coleridgeism at all." This is true, as many of us, who more or less belonged to Traill's generation, can remember, but it only raises the same question in the form of the reason for this difference.

The chief reason is not, I believe, to be looked for in any of those which are usually alleged. It did not consist in any radical conflict between the temperament of the poet and the philosopher as such. The example of Coleridge's great contemporary Goethe is sufficient to prove that the "ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy" was a quarrel between friends. Coleridge himself held

[1] Yet it deserves more notice than it has hitherto received and, as it is somewhat rare, I have added in an Appendix a few further notes upon it as furnishing reliable material for studies like the present.

[2] *Coleridge*, in English Men of Letters Series (1889).

that the aim and, in a sense, the method of both were essentially the same, namely, "the union of the universal and the particular". "Plato", he wrote,[1] "was a poetic philosopher, as Shakespeare was a philosophic poet." Each doubtless had its own medium and mode of expression, and this had to be remembered according to the rôle at the time. Coleridge too often forgot it—the exuberance of his language and the vividness of his imagery were too apt to run away with him, and to lead to his frequent failure to distinguish between metaphor and argument. But a philosophical style like that of Hume or Mill or, in our own time, of Bradley, is a rare accomplishment, and its absence in him was a venial fault, often atoned for in his marginal notes (where he found himself confined within strict limits as to subject and space) by vigorous, condensed expression, which leaves little to be desired.

Nor is more than a partial explanation to be found in lack of purpose or even of will to execute what he purposed. The manuscripts he left show, on the contrary, how indefatigably he laboured in the pain and sickness of his later years to make up for wasted talents. Even his failure to complete and publish the result of these labours was of comparatively little importance. His main ideas, in their essential outlines, were well known to an inner circle of admiring disciples, including, besides Green, men like John Sterling, of whom Carlyle reluctantly records that "in after times he did not complain of Coleridge's unintelligibility or attri-

[1] *Preliminary Treatise on Method.*

buted it only to the abstruse high nature of the topics handled". After Sterling's death his master's ideas could not have had a better sounding-board than the "Sterling Club", which included among its members J. S. Mill, Alfred Tennyson, and Carlyle himself. Traill touches a deeper reason when he notes the absence in Coleridge of "any moral theory of life". But this too, as we have seen, was only partially true, and Mill's estimate on the same subject was a very different one.

The real reason is I believe to be found, in the first place, in a certain unripeness of the time for the acceptance by philosophers of these ideas. It was true that the older empiricism may be said by this time to have run its course, but under the influence of the idea of evolution it seemed possible to revive it in a new form, and at the same time to satisfy the metaphysicians, as Spencer tried to do, with a theory of the Unknowable; while for those who inherited its dislike of metaphysics in any form, Comte's Positivism seemed to be providing it with deeper roots in a new philosophy of History. Even in Scotland, that genial home of metaphysical speculation, the ground was preoccupied by a form of pseudo-Kantianism [1] which, as bad currency is said to drive out good, obstructed the spread of better knowledge.

In the second place, and even more important, was the innate conservatism, which often prevented Coleridge from following out to the bitter end the principles he had the genius to seize. "He declares

[1] Hamilton's *Essay on the Unconditioned* appeared in 1829.

great truths and principles with sufficient boldness and clearness", wrote an anonymous author, "but often fails completely in his deductions from them and his applications of them." [1] Carlyle's view of the "swimming bladders" and "transcendental life-preservers", which he threw out to orthodox opinions, is well known, and is not without justification. In general philosophy, in spite of the advance he sought to make on Kant, we have seen how he allowed himself to be too much dominated by the Kantian separation between the material and the spiritual, the causal nexus by which Nature seemed bound and the freedom of the will. In religion this meant that Christianity was made to appear to stand on a different basis, not only of spiritual appeal, but of miraculous revelation, from all other religions. In politics the same conservatism, united with the same philosophical dualism, was responsible for the distinction he drew between classes in respect to their capacity to enter into the full rights of citizenship. No more here than in religion did he ever seem completely to realize that if freedom is the soul of human life, it must have its spring in human nature itself, and must permeate the whole body. True, in Nature there are all degrees of freedom and individuality, corresponding to different natural orders. But the differentia of human life is just that in it first freedom has become a common possession, and none can

[1] The *Relation of Philosophy to Theology* (London, 1851), p. 15. The same writer probably reflects the general impression of the time when he says: "Coleridge teaches no system, not even his own." *Ibid.*, p. 7.

be really free unless all are free. In science, finally it meant that while he was prepared to welcome the treatment of individual organisms from the point of view of a single principle dominating the life of the parts, he rejected the suggestion of applying the same idea to the evolution of the animal world, including man, as a whole.

In all these respects he seemed to be setting himself against the new currents of thought and feeling, into whose deeper spirit he otherwise penetrated further than any of his English contemporaries. That in the field of literary criticism these limitations had less opportunity of showing themselves, or that his own supreme genius in it enabled him to transcend them, is perhaps the reason why it is in this field that fullest recognition has been given by succeeding generations to his greatness as a thinker.

To-day we can afford to separate between his enunciation of principles and his success in carrying them out in detailed application, and the contention of this Study is that we do him wrong if we allow his failure to influence immediately the current of philosophical thought, and the limitations, which were the cause of it, to conceal from us the place he occupies in his own right in the development of idealistic philosophy in England and America. It may perhaps in the end prove to have been in favour of his ultimate influence that there has been a certain "lag" in its power of asserting itself. Certain it is that the present reaction against the logical idealism of the latter part of the nineteenth

century, and the rise of a more definitely ethical form of that doctrine, offer a more favourable atmosphere than ever before for the recognition of the Voluntarism with which his philosophy is so deeply dyed.

Be that as it may, it is more in the line of the main object of the present Study, neglecting contentious matter, to try in this Conclusion to state more precisely than there has hitherto been the opportunity of doing the place which is likely to be assigned to Coleridge in the history of Anglo-Saxon philosophy, and the feature in his teaching that is the main ground of his title to it.

1. The history in England of what at the present day is known as Idealistic Philosophy still remains to be written.[1] When it comes to be written it will, I believe, be found to be not less continuous, and not less characteristic of the English genius, than that which is commonly taken to be its main contribution to philosophy. Centuries before the age of Locke the note of this truer "way of ideas" had been struck by John Scotus Erigena, the last of the Platonists before philosophy passed under the yoke of mediaeval theology.[2] At least half a century before Locke wrote, a group of men in Cambridge, representing the best English tradition in religion and politics, revived the same note, and gave expression to it with a fullness and grace unequalled anywhere else in Europe. Though taken up and

[1] The series of studies of which this was intended to be one, shortly to be published, is intended as a small contribution to such a history.
[2] See Robert Adamson's article on him in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Ninth Edition.

applied in new ways at the beginning of the next century by their Oxford successors, John Norris and Arthur Collier, it was too remote from the empirical spirit of the time to make way against the "new" way of ideas. Berkeley's late-born Platonism was only a transient gleam of the old light, and the century closed with the triumphant domination of every field by the ideas inherited from Locke and Hume.

To Coleridge belongs the credit of having been the first to realize, with the sharp pang of the most sensitive mind of his time, the inadequacy of these ideas for the interpretation of the spiritual movements which were most characteristic of the age. Aided by the insight which his own early transference of allegiance from the Hartleian to the Platonic tradition gave him, he was able to develop ideas that were in his own words *Semina Rerum* [1]— seminal principles that, first unconsciously, then more and more consciously as the new century went on, were to dominate men's minds and be translated into theory and practice.

2. After all that has been already said of them, it is unnecessary to go into detail, but the central idea cannot be too often stated as that of the true meaning and place of Individuality in the world both of nature and of man.

In nature individuality is not to be looked for in any self-sustaining atom or cell, but in the extent to which a structure is able to reach out to and assimilate elements lying beyond the limits of its

[1] His title for MS. C.

own space and time existence, and thus to link itself with the whole to which it belongs, while at the same time rounding itself off into a self-maintaining unit within the larger sphere. Towards such individuality, expressing itself in ever high forms, all nature moves, rising on stepping-stones, not of dead but of living selves, each reflecting at its own level and according to its own capacity the glories of the Whole.

In human life the seat of individuality, now become self-conscious personality, is similarly to be sought for not in any centre of isolated and isolating feeling, but in the degree to which a man passes beyond the limits temporal and spiritual within which mere feeling confines him, and identifies himself, in thought, feeling, and action, with the larger life about him while remaining a self-integrating member of it. The infinite whole of which this larger life consists may be the only complete individual, the only completely comprehensive and self-sustaining being—therefore the only Person in the fullest sense of the word. But finite spirits may attain to a share in that fullness, in proportion as they approximate to its all-inclusive life. Life at its best is the will to approximation, perhaps in the end only an aspiration and a prayer, but "he prayeth best who loveth best", and love means this expansion expressed in terms of feeling.

It does not require any deep acquaintance with the history either of thought or practice in the course of the last hundred years to recognize in

this conception of individuality what was to become more and more the chief moulding, epoch-making influence in national life. Coleridge held that while "in the immense majority of men, even in civilized countries, speculative philosophy has ever been, and must ever remain, a *terra incognita*, yet all the epoch-making revolutions of the Christian world, the revolutions of religion, and with them the civil, social, and domestic habits of the nations concerned, have coincided with the rise and fall of metaphysical systems". So far as the above is a correct statement of the central thought in his own system, he has the merit of first formulating the idea whose rise was in his own modest language to "coincide" with the revolutions which have since taken place in all these departments and made our national life what it is to-day.

APPENDIX A

MATERIALS FOR STUDY OF COLERIDGE'S PHILOSOPHY

REFERENCE has been made in the Preface to the sources available for the study of Coleridge's philosophical opinions, but some fuller account is called for by reason of their multifariousness. They consist of: 1, His own published prose works. 2, Letters to friends, collections of Table Talk, and reminiscences of others. 3, Various manuscript remains, as yet for the most part unpublished, including marginal notes on those of the 340 books[1] containing them, which are of philosophic interest. To these deserves to be added the book *Spiritual Philosophy*, as an exposition of the leading principles of his Master's thought by his most intimate and understanding friend, Joseph Henry Green.

1. The most important of the first group are:—

The Friend, reprinted from the numbers that appeared 1809–10 in 1812; 3 vol. ed., 1818, described by Coleridge in the Preface as "a *refacciamento* rather than a new edition", "the additions forming so large a proportion of the whole work and the arrangement being altogether new"; 3rd edition, edited by Henry Nelson Coleridge, with the author's latest corrections and appendices restoring some passages omitted in the 1818 edition.

Biographia Literaria, 1st ed., 1817; 2nd ed. (H. N. Coleridge and Sarah Coleridge), 1847; frequently edited since.

A Preliminary Treatise on Method, written as the General Introduction to the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitania*, published separately as *Principles of the Science of Method*, 1818: much

[1] See J. L. Haney's *Bibliography of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*

"bedeviled, interpolated, and topsy-turvied" to the disgust of the author (Campbell's *Life*, p. 227 foll.).

Aids to Reflection, 1st ed., London, 1825; 2nd ed., New York, 1839; 5th ed. by Henry Nelson Coleridge, London, 1843; frequently edited since.

Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit, ed. H. N. Coleridge, 1840.

Hints toward the Formation of a more Comprehensive Theory of Life, ed. Seth B. Watson, 1848.

2. Under the second head come:—

(*a*) Collections of Letters that kept appearing up to 1911. The most important are *Letters, Conversations, and Recollections* by Thomas Allsop, 2 vols., 1836.

Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 2 vols., 1895.

Biographia Literaria, by A. Turnbull, 1911.

(*b*) Joseph Cottle's *Early Recollections*, 1837, and Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey, 1847.

Henry Crabb Robinson's *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence*, 1872.

Two "monologues" published in *Fraser's Magazine*, November and December 1835, on "Life" and "The Science and System of Logic", by a member of Coleridge's logic class.

3. The manuscript remains consist of (*a*) unfinished works:—

(*a*) *Two Volumes on Logic* in the British Museum (Egerton 2825 and 2826). Of these an analysis with extracts will be found in Miss Alice D. Snyder's book, *Coleridge on Logic and Learning*, pp. 78–103 and 104–27. The MS. is in the hand of several amanuenses with marginal annotations by Charles A. Ward, one time owner of it, and is undoubtedly the work alluded to in the letters of November 27, 1820, September 24, 1821, December 1822

(Allsop, *op. cit.*), in *Aids to Reflection* (ed. 1825, p. 174 n.), and in J. H. Green's *Spiritual Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 51. A list of sixteen chapters (imperfectly indicated in the MS. itself) is given at the beginning, showing as it goes from "History of Logic", "Philosophy of Education", "Logic as Canon", "Logical Acts" to a treatment of "Analytic and Synthetic Judgments", and finally of "Categories", more and more the influence of Kant's *Critique* upon Coleridge's conception of the scope of the science.

If this manuscript is the copy referred to in the last two of the above letters as practically completed and only awaiting transcription, Coleridge must have been speaking with more than his usual sanguineness. It is manifestly incomplete, and bears marks of illiteracy on every page. Miss Snyder has discussed, and on the whole justified, Green's decision against publishing it. But if, as now seems likely, the not less incomplete and unrevised *Opus Maximum* with other philosophical fragments are going to be printed, I see no reason for making an exception of the *Logic*. The study of philosophy in England and America has advanced in vain during the present generation if the student may not be trusted to select the ore and leave the dross in the work of its pioneers.

(*b*) More important for the study of Coleridge's philosophy in its later and more metaphysical developments is the manuscript preserved in three vellum-bound volumes in the possession of the Rev. Gerard H. B. Coleridge, of Leatherhead, marked conjecturally in Charles Ward's hand, vol. i, ii, iii—an order which Miss Snyder, on equally conjectural grounds, proposes to reverse. This is undoubtedly a part of the *Opus Maximum* to which Coleridge, as he tells us in a letter of 1821,[1] had devoted "more than twenty years of his life", and of which "more than half" at that time "had been dictated by

[1] Allsop, *op. cit.*, p. 82. Miss Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 8, gives a long list of other references to it.

him so as to exist, fit for the press, to his friend and devoted pupil Mr. Green". Whether this is the actual copy referred to or not, its authenticity is guaranteed by the frequent autograph corrections in important passages.

(*c*) Clearly a part of the same work, and with the same marks of authenticity, is the manuscript in possession of the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. It consists of a long chapter (unnumbered) "On the Divine Ideas"[1] devoted to the discussion of the problem of moral evil followed by part of a still longer one without a title, which begins with a carefully drawn out criticism of the Plotinian idea of the Trinity as contrasted with the Christian, but is chiefly occupied with the question of the sense in which it is possible to demonstrate the existence and attributes of God either on the ground of direct intuition, or as a logical inference from the data of experience. The discussion of Brahminism as an attempt of the former kind offers scope to the imaginative as well as the critical genius of the poet-philosopher of which he is not slow to avail himself. The manuscript abruptly ends in the middle of an introduction to a discussion of Berkeley's proof of the being of God in the *Minute Philosopher*.

It is possible, perhaps even probable, that other parts of the MS. of the *Opus Maximum* survive, and may still be found. Sufficient has been quoted from those which we have to show how far, on the subjects dealt with, they supersede all that is derivable from other sources. As compared with anything we have in the published works they show a mastery of the implications of his own fundamental principles, and a command of his materials that makes their fragmentary character all the more deplorable.

[1] When residing in Los Angeles for some months in 1928 I was unaware of the existence of this manuscript, and have only been able through the kindness of Professor Alice Snyder to read it in photostat copy since my return to England.

(*d*) Of unique interest, as containing autograph notes dating apparently from 1825 of his later views on many philosophical subjects, is the manuscript commonplace book with the characteristic title, "Semina Rerum, Audita, Cogitata, Cogitanda of a Man of Letters, friendless because of no Faction, repeatedly and in strong language inculpated of hiding his Light under a Bushel, yet destined to see publication after publication abused by the *Edinburgh Review*, as the representative of one Party, and not even noticed by the *Quarterly Review* as the Representative of the other—and to receive as the meed of his labours for the Cause of freedom against Despotry and Jacobinism, of the Church against Infidelity and Schism, and of Principle against Fashion and Sciolism, Slander, Loss, and Embarrassment". At the end it contains under the date May 24, 1828, a synopsis of his metaphysical system—"more nearly approaching", as Miss Snyder notes, [1] "the epic in the quality of its conception than do any of his published prose works"—placed on record "by S. T. C., R. A., R. S. L., etc.

> Author of Tomes, whereof tho' not in Dutch,
> The Public little knows, the Publisher too much."

(*e*) Coleridge's reputation as a philosophical thinker has suffered more from the evidences of plagiarism (whether conscious or unconscious) in his writings than from any other cause. What makes the multitudinous marginal notes on philosophical books used by him, that have come down to us, of such extreme value is the comment they enable us to make on this subject, through the proof they afford of the alertness of his critical faculty in regard to the authors from whom he is alleged to have plagiarized. For illustrations on fundamental doctrines the reader may be referred to the above Study. The sources themselves are not all accessible, but the most important of the notes are gradually becoming

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 3, where the synopsis is printed at length.

available, and those which are most important for Coleridge's relation to contemporary philosophers are fortunately to be found in copies of works used by him which are preserved in the British Museum.[1] They include:—

Moses Mendelssohn's *Morgenstunden.* Erster Theil (1790), and his *Jerusalem* (1791).[2]

Baron von Wolff's *Logic* or *Rational Thoughts on the Powers of the Human Understanding* (Eng. Tr. 1770).[3]

Kant's *Vermischte Schriften; Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1793); *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797).

Fichte's *Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800); *Versuch einer Kritique aller Offenbarung* (1792).

Schelling's Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur (1803); *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (1800).

Tennemann's *Geschichte der Philosophie,* twelve volumes (1794).

Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik,* 1812–16.[4]

Besides these, the present writer has been able to consult two volumes of *Marginalia,* transcribed by E. H. Coleridge under date November 6 and 7, 1889, from the originals in possession of Lord Coleridge of Ottery St. Mary's, containing notes, among other books, on Kant's *Critique of the Pure Reason;* Jacobi's *Comments on Maas's Versuch über die Lehre d. Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*; Kant's *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*; Law's *English Version of the Works of Jacob Boehme,* which had been presented to Coleridge by De Quincey.[5] If these

[1] See Catalogue under S. T. Coleridge, *sub fin.* They are given out to be read only in North Reading Room.

[2] Professor Snyder has given an account of these notes and their relation to the text of the MS. *Logic* in the *Journal of English and Germanic Philosophy* for October 1929.

[3] Notes printed in full, Snyder, *Coleridge on Logic and Learning,* p. 158 foll.

[4] Notes printed in full, Snyder, *op. cit.,* p. 162 foll.

[5] The annotations on Boehme are printed in *Modern Language Notes* for November 1927 (vol. xlii, No. 7, p. 434 foll.) by Miss Snyder.

and his other philosophical marginalia were collated and published, as De Quincey hoped they would be, they would form a unique record not only of Coleridge's enormous reading, but, in so far as they can be dated, of the growth of his opinions. Unfortunately they are seldom dated by Coleridge himself, and we are left to the more precarious light of internal evidence.

(*f*) If for no other reason than that of the light it throws on the single point of Coleridge's attitude to the evolution hypothesis,[1] the miscellaneous collection of fragments (British Museum, MS. Egerton 2801) deserves mention in this Appendix. The last of the sources mentioned in the above classification is peculiar enough, and has sufficient independent interest to have separate mention in a second Appendix.

[1] See above, p. 130. For other excerpts, see Snyder, *op. cit.*, pp. 75–7, and 153 n.

APPENDIX B

JOSEPH HENRY GREEN'S SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY

GREEN was the most philosophically cultured and the most devoted of Coleridge's disciples. Educated for the medical profession and becoming a distinguished member of it, he held successively the Professorship of Anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons and that of Surgery, first at St. Thomas's Hospital, afterwards (on its foundation) at King's College. He was twice President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and twice delivered the Hunterian Oration (in 1840 and again in 1847). At what precise time he became acquainted with Coleridge is not known; but it seems certain that it must have been as early as 1817, the year in which the German poet and critic Ludwig Tieck paid a visit to England and met Coleridge more than once at Green's house. Green had been appointed Demonstrator in Anatomy at St. Thomas's the year before, but with his medical studies he combined a keen interest in German philosophy, and was fired by Tieck's reports of Solger's lectures in Berlin to pay a visit to Germany, before taking up his professional duties, and obtain first-hand knowledge of what was being there taught. Solger was much taken with him, and in a letter to Tieck describes the French philosopher, Cousin, who visited him subsequently, as "a sore change from our gallant Green".[1] The manner in which on his return from Germany his friendship with Coleridge ripened is familiar matter of the poet's biography.

Left as literary executor, at his friend's death, in possession of all his manuscripts, and with complete

[1] See for these and other particulars of Green's biography Dr. John Simon's Memoir prefixed to *Spiritual Philosophy*, of which he was the editor.

discretion as to publication, and at about the same time, by the death of his father, and the inheritance of his property, finding himself free from the necessity of continuing practice as a doctor, Green decided to devote himself thenceforth to his task, as philosophical trustee, conceived with truly Coleridgean amplitude. "Theology, Ethics, Politics and Political History, Ethnology, Language, Aesthetics, Psychology, Physics and the allied sciences, Biology, Logic, Mathematics, Pathology"—his biographer tells us, "were all thoughtfully studied by him, at least in their basial principles and metaphysics, and most were elaborately written of, as though for the divisions of some vast cyclopaedic work". Meanwhile, having been born, as Traill wittily puts it, "under post-diluvian conditions",[1] lest his master's main object of the vindication of religious doctrine should remain unfulfilled, he wrote, under the title of *Religio Laici*, a first sketch of what was subsequently recast under the title Spiritual Being, finally again recast to form the second volume of *Spiritual Philosophy*, in the Appendix to which Dr. Simon has printed long extracts from the earlier manuscripts.

The circumstances under which this work was finally produced have been already referred to.[2] The book has suffered undeserved neglect for the reasons there mentioned, and, where it has received particular notice, as in Traill's *Coleridge*, has been treated with still more undeserved cynicism. It is not a great work, and suffers from the same kind of conservativism that we have noted in Coleridge himself, and (with less excuse) from the same neglect to put himself in direct touch with post-Fichtean philosophy in Germany.[3] Of the

[1] *Coleridge*, in English Men of Letters Series, p. 185.

[2] P. 256 above.

[3] His knowledge of Hegel seems to have been derived at a bad second hand from Morell's *History of Philosophy* (see *Spiritual Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 407 n.).

"School of Hegel", he has nothing better to say than that it denies the transcendence of Deity. But he was a man of real philosophical ability, and his training in physiology gave him a method of approach to philosophical problems which lent a certain freshness to much that he wrote.[1] The two Hunterian Orations on *Vital Dynamics* and *Mental Dynamics* respectively, in which he seeks to combine Coleridgean with Hunterian ideas, witness to the breadth of his culture and his power as a writer on non-theological subjects. In his chief work we do him wrong in giving the prominence, that Traill does, to the second and more theological part. Its editor is nearer the mark in saying that the space the Author devotes to it is disproportionate to its importance, as only one of a series of deductive applications of the principles, which he had made his own; and that, had Green been longer spared, he would probably have expanded the compendious statements of the first volume "with infinitely greater amplitude".

It is at any rate to the first volume, and particularly to the second part of it, that the student to-day will turn for light upon these principles, and the development of which they were capable at the hands of a particularly clear-minded writer. Yet even in the second volume readers interested in the interpretation of the Christian tradition in the light of Neo-Kantian thought will find a striking resemblance between its teaching and that of the author's greater namesake Thomas Hill Green, as we have it in his "Lectures on the New Testament", and in his Sermons on "Faith", and "The Witness of God" (*Works*, vol. iii). The book in this respect may be said to represent the last stage in the story of the Theological Idealism which was first planted in England by Scotus Erigena, took vigorous root and flourished in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Platonism,

[1] I have elsewhere remarked on the debt which Philosophy owes to the medical profession (*Mind*, N.S. 36, p. 439).

was revived by Coleridge, and loaded with a luxuriance of fruit that went near to bringing it to the ground, and is here reset in a form, which the writer trusted would enable it to renew its youth in the more critical atmosphere of his own time.

APPENDIX C

Passages from the MS. in the Henry E. Huntington Library, which the Librarian kindly permits to be printed here for the first time.

The Problem of Finitude and of Evil

[P. 10 foll.]

Are we struck at beholding the cope of Heaven imaged in a dew-drop? The least of the animalcula to which that dew-drop is an ocean presents an infinite problem, of which the omnipresent is the only solution. If then even the philosophy of nature can remain philosophy only by rising above nature, and by abstracting from nature, much less is it possible for the philosophy of the Eternal to evolve out of itself, that is out of the pure reason, the actual existence of change, of the beginning of that which is, yet before was not, of that which has been and is not, of that which is not yet but is to come. The organs of philosophy are ideas only, and we arrive at ideas by abstracting from time: and this truth is so obvious that even in popular language we declare it impossible to form any idea of matter, of pleasure, or of pain. Yet shall we say that these are not? Is there no history because history, or the succession of acts and agents and of phenomena, considered as the effects, products, or results of acts and agents, is not the same with philosophy though it is grounded on it? Do the mechanical powers, the lever, the pulley, the screw, not exist because they are not the same with the immediate and magical and everywhere present powers, without which the former yet could not be? The passage from the absolute to the separated finite, this is the difficulty which who shall overcome? This is the chasm which ages have tried in vain to overbridge. If the finite be in no sense separate from the infinite, if it be one with the same, whence proceeded evil? For the finite can be one with the absolute, inasmuch only as it represents

the absolute verily under some particular form. Herein no negation is implied, nor privation, no negation from without, for it is the position of all in the each. But that it is the form which it is (is) so far from being the result of negation that even in the less imperfect shapes of the senses, those which proceed from living forms as in all objects of the organic world (take a plant as an instance), this shape is at once the product and the sign of the positive power of the plant; and a form, or rather a parent-shape proceeding from negation, either simply or in connection with an overpowering impression from without, is found only in the inanimate: the termination of the path of the arrow in the air, or the form of the fragment storm-rent from the rock or of the aggregate of sands in the pebble, which the pressure of the waters has compressed, and the motion of the tide rounded. But if, on the other hand, the finite here spoken of be separate and diverse from the absolute, we might, indeed, explain the evil therefrom, but then the question would return how was the finite possible? I said hastily that from such a finite we might educe the origin of evil: but such a finite were Evil! Still the standing room, the δὸς ποῦ στῶ, remains unanswered, unattained.

The Principle of the Solution

[P. 39 foll.]

The solution is this. To God the idea is real, inasmuch as it is one with that will, which, as we see in its definition, is verily *Idem et Alter*; but to itself the idea is absolutely real, in so far only as its particular will affirms, and in affirming constitutes its particular reality to have no true being except as a form of the universal, and one with the universal Will. This, however, is the affirmation of a will, and of a particular will. It must, therefore, contain the potentiality, that is, the power of possibly *not* affirming the identity of its reality with the reality of God, which is actual absolutely (*Actus purissimus*

sine ullâ potentialitate); or of willing to be, yet not willing to be only because God is, and in the being of God alone. In other words, if the essence of its being be will, and this will under a particular form, there must be a possibility of willing the universal or absolute under the predominance of the particular, instead of willing the particular solely as the glory and presentation of the plenitude of the universal. As long as this act remains wholly potential, i.e. implied in the holy will as its opposite, necessarily possible because, being a holy will, it is a will, and a particular will, so long is it compatible with God, and so long therefore hath it an actual reality as one of the eternal, immutable ideas of God. But in the will to actualize this potentiality, or as in common language we should say, in the will to convert this possibility into a reality it necessarily makes—*it*self! shall I say? or rather *a* self that is not God, and hence by its own act becomes alien from God. But in God all actual reality is contained: in making therefore a Self that is not God all actuality is necessarily lost, a potentiality alone remains . . a causativeness must remain, for this is the essential of the will; but it is a causativeness that destroys, which annihilates the actual; and, in the potential swallowing up all actuality so that the potential as merely potential remains the only form of its reality, it is an act that may be said to realize the potential in the moment of potentializing the alone truly real. What would follow but a world of contradictions, when the first self-constituting act is in its essence a contradiction? The will to make a centre which is not a centre, a will not the same with the absolute will, and yet not contained in the absolute, that is an absolute that is not absolute.

An Old Illustration

[P. 124 foll.]

To borrow an illustration of spiritual truths, above all of spiritual truths so unutterably transcendent, from the

most glorious objects of the senses or the most subtle and refined forms of the material world is not without peril. But I will venture to anticipate those higher views of the material world, which I trust will be opened out in the following section of this work, and after the example of the inspired prophets, no less than of the ancient sages, whose philosophy approached nearest to the doctrines of inspiration:

> "We'll try to borrow from the glorious sun
> A little light to illustrate this act,
> Such as he is in his solstitial noon,
> When in the welkin there's no cloudy tract,
> For to make gross his beams and light refract.
> Then sweep by all those globes that by reflexion
> His long small shafts do rudely beaten back,
> And let his rays have undenied projection,
> And so we will pursue this mystery's retection."

Not more impossible is it to conceive the Sun, the triunity of the *focus*, *lux et lumen*, to be in all its splendour, and yet rayless, than to conceive the spiritual Sun without its effluence, the essentially causative will without its co-eternal products. As long as the rays are part of the glory, radiant distinctly, but without division, so long are they one with the sun, and such must be from eternity to eternity. But these spiritual rays are themselves essentially Wills, and have their causativeness, which is one with that of the Divine will as long as they are rays of the Sun. But if we could conceive any number as separate from the solar orb and no longer a prolongation of its effluence, strangled in clouds, and born (e?) anew as it were in rainbows and the phantoms of the air, would there be for this any loss or change in the sun or in the solar sphere? But to what purpose do I adduce this symbol? If the reader beholds and contemplates it in the spirit of the corpuscular system, the utter differences will overlay the shadowy and less than poetic likeness, and set into ferment the sensuous imagination which it is our

main desideratum to keep at rest, silent, and under a veil? . . . I have no other answer to this objection, but that I have found it a help in my own mind to use this image, as the philosopher of Nola had done before, as a mental diagram for the fixing of the attention, and the ordinance of the memory, as, in short, the best, most comprehensive, richest and most flexible organ of a *memoria technica*: and this the sun with its profundity of forms and forces, of lights and shadows will not fail to present and without risk of error, if only the main difficulty have been once thoroughly apprehended, and in that very apprehension overcome and disarmed, though not removed. It is enough to have seen that it is a difficulty which arises out of our nature, and while that nature remains, must remain with it . . nay, will be active, as while the ear is deeply listening to some sweet harmony from an unknown distance, the eyes will gaze thitherward, even though it should have been ascertained that it was the music of the air, such as travellers are said to have heard in Ceylon and Sumatra, produced by currents and counter-currents, the glancing fingers of electric fire in the higher atmosphere.

Proofs of the Existence of God

[P. 145 foll.]

If we can prove that the failure in each particular scheme is not attributable to any fault on the part of the reasoner, which some following reasoner might correct, but to the very nature of the proof itself, we shall have amply demonstrated our position, that there is no speculative proof, no properly scientific or logical demonstration possible. In other words, that the idea of the Godhead is the true source and indispensable precondition of all our knowledge of God. That consequently all that is true and valuable in any of the so-called proofs and demonstrations, consists of expositions of this idea, or the different means, by which the understanding is enabled

to exemplify this idea in all its experiences, whether inward or from without, whether derived from the sense and the senses, or by reflection on itself and on its own operations. Nor is this all—we must add (to) the theoretic purpose answered by thus exemplifying the idea of God the moral one of awakening the conscious attention of the soul to the great idea with the emotions inseparable from its due contemplation—which, so far from the idea or knowledge being deduced or concluded from any or all the particulars of sensation or reflexion, is that of deriving these as components of a world (*τοῦ κόσμου* and not *τοῦ χάους*) from this idea. The Reason[1] as the living source of living and substantial verities, presents the Idea to the individual mind and subjective intellect, which receives and employs it to its own appropriate ends, namely, to understand thereby both itself and all its objects—receives it, I say, uncomprehended by it, to comprehend the universe, the world without and the yet more wonderful world within.

[1] Autograph note: I here use the word in its highest as well as most comprehensive sense—and not for the mere Collectaneum of *theoretic* principles, or of such speculative truths as are accompanied with the sense of unconditional necessity and absolute universality.

Brahmanism

[P. 267 foll.]

There is in almost all the Sanscrit philosophical and religious writings, as far as they have fallen under my notice, a character, which, it seems to me, might be plausibly accounted for on the supposition of childish intellects living among gigantic objects, of mean thoughts and huge things—living Lilliputs among inanimate Brobdignags. Thus their Pantheism or visible God, God, proved to them, not from, but in and by the evidence of their senses, taken in conjunction with the languor of a relaxing climate and the lulling influence of a deep, sombre and gigantic vegetation, seems to me a natural result of an imbecile understanding, producing indistinction, half from indolence and half intentionally by a partial closure of the eyelids, and when all hues and outlines melt into a garish mist deeming it unity.

The translator of the Bhagavad Gita finds in the story of churning the ocean for the fourteen jewels, a wonderful affinity to—Milton! I could not, I confess, help inferring from this remark that taste does not resemble the wines that improve by a voyage to and from India. For if there be one character of genius predominant in Milton it is this, that he never passes off bigness for greatness. Children never can make things big enough, and exactly so is it with the poets of India.

It would be more than we are entitled to expect of the human mind, if Sir W. Jones, Mr. Wilkins, etc., great and good as we know them to have been, had not overrated the merit of works, the power of understanding which is of such rare occurrence, and so difficultly attained. In the present instance there is an additional excuse; an excuse which more than acquits the judges, though it cannot prevent the reversal of their decision; for to the writings in question all the notions, images, and feelings, which are best calculated to excite that obscure

awe, that lies midway between religion and superstition, hang and encluster. Their undoubted antiquity is so great, and the antiquity claimed for them at once so daring and so visionary that we might almost say "*liber ipse superstat*", the book itself walks like a ghost of a departed world. There is a superstition involved in a survival so contrary to the ordinary experience of mankind. I have myself paid this debt of homage on my first presentation to these foreign potentates by aid of the great linguists above mentioned. But having so done, I sought to purge the sight with the euphrasy of common sense, and took a second and more leisurely view before I put the question to myself, "And what then have I seen?"

"What are
These Potentates of inmost Ind?"

Shall I confess the truth? Their next neighbour of the North, the temple-throned infant of Thibet, with the Himālā behind and the cradle of the Ganges at his feet, conveys to my mind an impressive likeness, seems to me a pregnant symbol of the whole Brahman Theosophy. Without growth, without production! Abstract the enormous shapes and phantasms the Himālā, the Ganges of the fancy, and what remains?—A baby! The personality and the additional mystery of secondary impersonation, metamorphoses, incarnations, these and all the attributes of persons, dance in and out like wandering flashes, or motley aliens from a distant country, the mutes of the show, often enough to remind us of their incompatibility with the doctrines of omneity and infinity, which are the constant theme and the philosophic import of the Indian theology; but without even an attempt to resolve the riddle. These impersonations or Avatars betray themselves as fables μυθοι half verbal and built on accidents of language, and half symbolical; though nothing can be more obscure and conjectural than their direct interpretation.

INDEX OF NAMES

Abernethy, J., 119
Alison, A., 195
Aristotle, 70, 83, 114, 155

Bacon, 33, 65, 70 foll., 95
Baxter, R., 46, 85
Beattie, 80
Benn, A. W., 37, 58, 116
Bentham, J., 32, 174
Berkeley, 45 foll., 76 foll.
Blumenbach, 49, 119
Boehme, 55, 271
Bonar, J., 154
Bosanquet, B., 142, 198, 200
Bradley, F. H., 15, 68, 161, 254
Brown, A. B., 251
Browning, R., 198
Burke, E., 26, 168 foll., 194
Butler, J., 139
Butler, S., 139
Byron, 27

Caird, E., 31, 236, 247
Campbell, Mrs. O. W., 27
Campbell, J. D., 45
Carlyle, T., 31, 52, 135, 196, 259 foll.
Chalmers, Thomas, 27
Cobban, A., 162, 189, 194
Coleridge, Derwent, 35, 46, 56
Coleridge, Gerard H. B., 18, 268
Coleridge, Henry N., 55
Coleridge, Lord, 271
Coleridge, Luke, 119
Coleridge, Sarah, 266
Comte, 259
Condillac, 61
Cottle, 46
Cousin, 273
Cudworth, 118

Darwin, C., 130, 134
Darwin, E., 130
Davy, Humphry, 119
De Quincey, 44, 48 foll., 220, 271 foll.
Descartes, 46, 94, 101, 223
Driesch, 127.

Epicurus, 124

Fichte, 52 foll., 59, 94, 150, 201, 271
Frend, 39

Gillman, J., 38, 120
Gingerich, G. F., 42 foll.
Godwin, W., 61
Goethe, 257
Green, J. H., 57, 127, 238, 246, 256, 266, 268 foll., 272 foll.
Green, T. H., 30, 198, 247, 275
Grotius, 177

Hall, Robert, 27
Hamilton, 259
Hartley, 30, 38 foll., 42, 45 foll., 51, 61, 199
Harvey, J. W., 251
Hegel, 25, 47, 58 foll., 61, 85, 87 foll., 98 foll., 117, 182, 271, 274 foll.
Heraclitus, 54, 85
Herbert, George, 250
Herford, C. H., 49
Hobbes, 47, 118, 166 foll., 174
Hort, F. J. A., 64, 218
Howard, C., 38 foll.
Hume, 30, 79, 81, 88, 225, 258
Hunter, J., 119 foll.

James, W., 15
John, St., 47, 245
Jones, Sir W., 225, 283

Kant, 31 and *passim*
Klopstock, 48

Lamarck, 131
Lamb, 16, 27, 37
Leibnitz, 54, 61
Lessing, 49
Locke, 30, 46, 51, 74, 226
Lowell, 214
Luther, 178

Mackail, J. W., 208, 214
Mendelssohn, Moses, 50, 61 foll., 70, 72, 104, 271
Mill, J. S., 32, 61, 63, 149, 163, 258 foll.
Milton, 65, 225
More, Henry, 38

Napoleon, 173, 179
Newman, J. H., 116
Newton, 40, 51, 178
Norris, 224
Novalis, 31

Oakley, Hilda D., 230
Oswald, 80

Paley, 138, 151, 153 foll., 174
Paton, H. J., 85
Paul, St., 47, 235, 245
Peel, Sir R., 191
Petrarch, 158
Pfleiderer, 218
Plato, 38 foll., 46, 60, 65, 83, 95, 97, 114, 116 foll., 178, 198, 207, 234, 253
Plotinus, 37 foll., 105 foll., 113, 117
Poole, T., 51
Pope, 157
Puffendorf, 177
Pythagoras, 97

Reid, 30
Robinson, H. C., 47
Rousseau, 26, 168, 171 foll.
Royce, 254.

Saintsbury, 196 foll., 200, 214
Schelling, 51 foll., 58, 118, 197, 201 foll., 210, 216, 271
Schlegel, 196, 207, 213
Scott, 27
Scotus Erigena, 275
Shakespeare, 65, 100, 258
Shawcross, 198
Shedd, 38 and *passim*
Simon, J., 273 foll.
Smith, Adam, 156
Smith, N. Kemp, 201
Snyder, Alice D., 17 and *passim*
Socrates, 116, 235
Solger, 273
Sorley, W. R., 40
Southey, 39, 157.
Spencer, H., 259
Spinoza, 45 foll., 56, 58, 84, 104
Stephen, Leslie, 16, 43, 50, 203, 208, 256
Sterling, John, 258 foll.
Stirling, Hutchison, 134
Storr, Vernon, 218
Stuart, 163

Taylor, Jeremy, 207, 234
Taylor, Thomas, 38
Tennemann, 95, 105 foll., 106, 110, 235, 271
Tennyson, 259
Tieck, 273
Traherne, T., 13
Traill, H. D., 163, 257, 259, 274
Tulloch, J., 218, 238
Turnbull, A., 45, 57
Turner, J. E., 227

Voltaire, 27, 47

Wallace, W., 254
Wallas, G., 186
Ward, C. A., 267
Watson, S. B., 120, 135
Watson, Lucy, 191 foll.
Webb, C. J. C., 227
Wedgwood, T., 49
Whewell, 61
Whitehead, A. N., 243
Wither, 198
Wolff, 54, 61, 271
Wordsworth, 44 foll., 47 foll., 206, 213

Zeno, 53, 84

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